



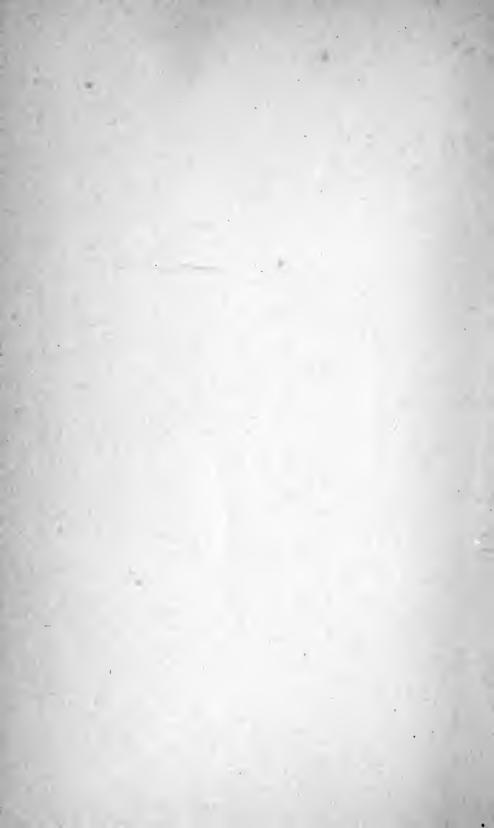
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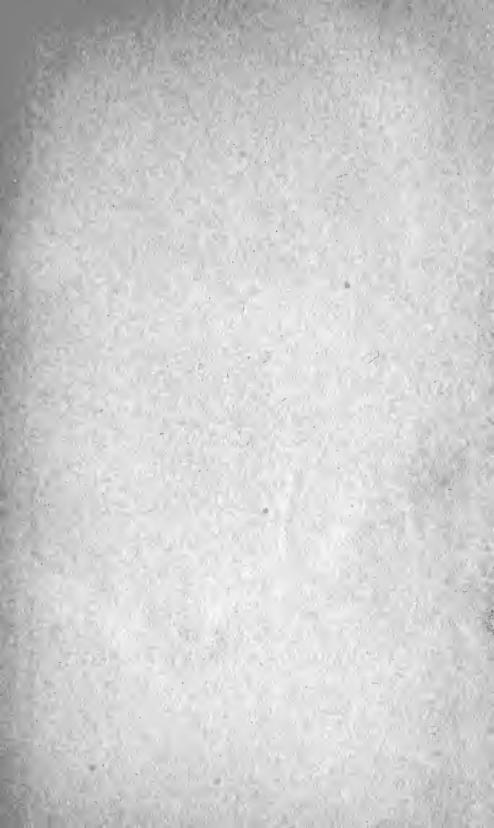
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THE BAN OF BALDURBANE

AN EPIC

BY
HENRY R. GIBSON



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1912

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PROLOGUE

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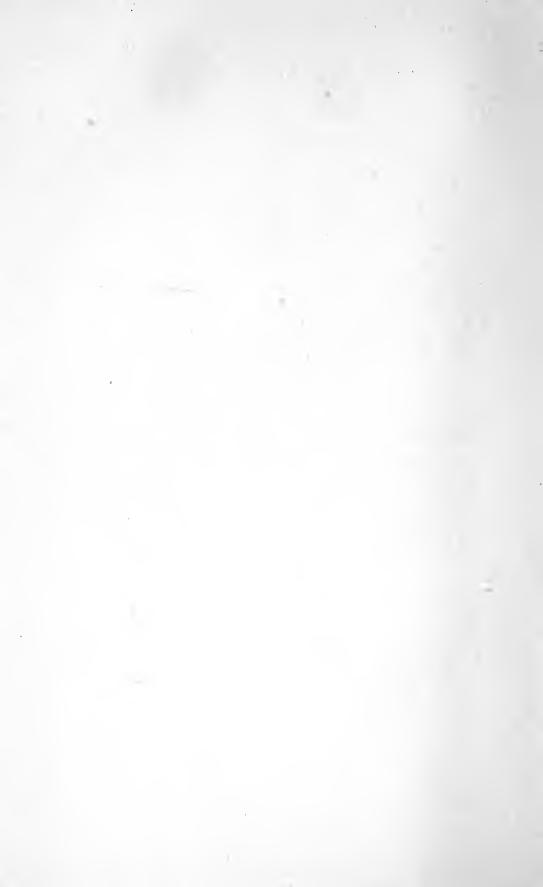
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PROLOGUE

I

We start this life with loves and dreams,
And forecasts of futurity;
We take as real whatever seems,
And ceaseless pray for what's to be.
Our hearts lead us as by a spell,
We trust in all implicitly,
Against good reason we rebel,
And seldom bend on willing knee.

II

Then springs ambition in our heart,
And its half brother, selfishness;
Then hate doth come, and love depart,
While all is wagered for success;
And though great griefs are sure to come,
And chasms in our pathway lie,
We'd rather suffer martyrdom,
Than with the rule of right comply.

The Ban of Baldurbane

III

But love forever hopes and prays,
And angels sometimes intervene;
The sword of truth vile error slays,
The hand of God is plainly seen;
Reason her mighty sway exerts,
The wrongs we've done with grief we see;
Repentance now our soul converts,
And sounds, at last, a jubilee.

PART 1

THE BOOK OF LOVES AND DREAMS

Of every virtue Love's the soul,
Of justice, truth and holiness;
Of every virtue Love's the whole,—
Of charity and lowliness:
Her natal home Jehovah's breast,
Where'er she lives is Paradise.
Deprived of this all-hallowing guest,
E'en Heaven were Hell, and virtue, vice.

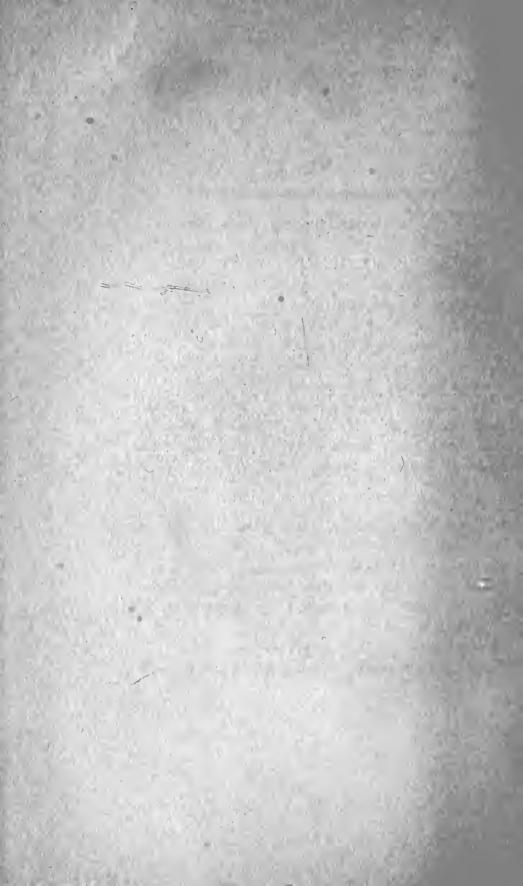


CHAPTER I

MUSINGS, MYTHS AND MYSTERIES

PROEM

The Scribe, a college student, while musing on a lake shore, about various myths and mysteries, falls into a revery, wherein he hears an invocation to Love, and meets Yndafrene, "Maid of his Eden days." His attention is attracted by a mystic Wreath of Myrtle Leaves, purporting to be from the planet, Venus, and containing many words and pictures, which he undertakes to translate. Some of these pictures resemble Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

THE SCRIBE MUSES OF MYTHS

Sweet 'tis in summer-time to roam abroad, When, in youth's prime, our thoughts go floating wide

From land to sea, from sea to sky and God, And all is bright, and life seems glorified;—Sweet 'tis on such a jaunt, beside some shore, To give free reign to fancy's airy steeds, And all the realms of romance wander o'er,—Calling to mind those grand heroic deeds That shine so bright on glory's golden page; And sweeter still, if, as on wings of dove, Our thoughts go forth on true love's pilgrimage, Unto that sacred shrine, whose saint is her we love.

Beside a Northern lake, where tower and hall And college bell, and student's stalwart call, Proclaimed old Hobart's classical domains, Alone one summer morn the Scribe had strolled,— His thoughts untrammeled by stern reason's chains,

His memory and his fancy uncontrolled;— All deeply pondering, on legends weird and old;

Musing, at first, of those strange fabled sights
Of ghosts all black, and headless men on steeds,
Careering o'er the lake on moonless nights,
Intent, 'twas said, on most infernal deeds,
Then mused he of that faithful Indian brave,
Young Agayentah, lover firm and true,
Who for love's sake did plunge beneath its wave,
And changed was to a log of ebon hue,
Which upright ever floats from shore to shore
As his dear Echo calls, while every pore
In hopeless grief doth groan, for her he finds no
more;—

Mused he of Kings stronger than Hercules,
Braver than Cæsar, or the demon powers,
Battling for glory on earth's plains and seas;—
Of queens, fairer than light, sweeter than flowers,
With eyes like Vesper's and a smile like May's;—
A panorama saw he, wide, sublime,
Tinted with births, with struggles, and with
deaths,

Like moving pictures on the page of time;—
All hist'ry and hypothesis, all myths,
All tales of magic and of wizard strife,
Fables and fictions, dreams of poesy;—
But chiefly such as painted like to life
Bright scenes of love, and deeds of chivalry,
Right ever victor, wrong ever o'erthrown,—
No one holding at last aught but his very own.

Beneath the trees' calm shade a brook did creep,
There kissing lilies' cheeks 'mid whisperings,
And humming here its pebbly babes to sleep,
With liquid lullabies. So soft their wings
The zephyrs 'mong the leaves made no alarms,
And no sound came from grass, or rock, or tree,
But cricket chirps and bee-winged minstrelsy.
Where downward reached an elm its crooked arms
To lave its fingers in the cooling brook,
Upon a mound of moss the Scribe did rest,
Watching two mated doves build up their nest
With gentle cooing and most tender look;
While slowly through his mind did float a dream,
(Like heavenly vision in a moonlight haze),
Of Yndafrene, the fair, maid of his Eden days.

Then o'er his soul's calm sea brooded supreme All halcyon-like, a blissful ecstasy, Which words of human speech would not beseem. Into his ears soft music murmuring crept, (Like notes of distant lute-strings zephyr swept), Till all the world seemed nought but melody, That through his spirit blissfully did steal. Then did he hear, or seemed to hear, or feel,—(For 'twas a feeling rather than a voice,) These words, or thoughts like words, that made his soul rejoice:

CANTO 2

AN INVOCATION TO LOVE

"Smile all ye things that owe to love your birth; Smile, all ye angels, all ye maids of earth; Grow bright, oh, moon; sweet stars, bend down your eyes;

Smile Heaven and earth, and seas and lands and skies,

And fill our souls with your most potent charm, That charm divine, Jehovah's second Self,—All full of goodness and devoid of harm,—Radiant with sympathy, and free from pelf, Celestial Love! the light of Paradise, And source of every bliss that's pure beneath the skies.

"Oh, through our tongues to all the world cry out,

Unto the sons of men with mighty shout,
Till all your words shall hear and own your sway,

And foretaste have of Christ's millennial day.
Oh, for thy voice, thou organ of the sky,
That thrills the hosts of Heaven with ecstasy;
Oh, for thy mind, thou great Archangel bard,
Whose words so wise the Cherubim regard;
That we the praise of Love so well may sing,
In symphonies so trebly ravishing,

That all the planets, stars and suns of space, Might so be charmed with her ecstatic grace, Our song they'll learn, and thus her excellence Forever chime to all, with perfect eloquence.

"Thou bond of peace, thou soul of ecstasy, All hallowed Love, in whom unite the Three! Thou Queen divine of God's own Kingdom-home, (Where evermore thou dost in beauty bloom), Thy name we bless, and bow in homage low, Hoping thy smile to win, without the which Dark would earth be, and Heaven without its glow;

With thee all men are equal, poor and rich; Thy holy eyes see neither wealth nor fame, But hearts alone, and deem all honest hearts the same.

"Philosophy, when young and fancy free, A stone long sought with touch so magical That to pure gold 'twould turn base mineral, And all things change by its weird chemistry. In vain the search! But thy soft touch, oh, Love.

Alone of all things here or things above, Each thought and passion base will purify, Each gentle wish and deed will glorify, Each good impulse cast in a better mold. And sin's infernal dross turn to celestial gold. "Love to our race is a necessity:
Had Love herself not been we would not be.
Father and mother hath she been to us
And in her benefactions generous.
Where'er she dwells that place is holy ground,
And free it ever is from hate and strife.
In her blest realm is El Dorado found,
Within whose midst blooms bright the Tree of
Life,

From whose roots' sap doth flow the fount of youth,

And whose high boughs bear bright the golden fruit of truth.

"Beneath Love's reign no sword is ever drawn, No war drums beat, no fields with corpses strewn; No worthy man doomed by decrees of state;— But far and high peace floats her flag milkwhite.

The devil's gospel of eternal hate
Before the smile of Love doth lose its might.
All evil charms the charm of Love out-charms,
And from the souls of men casts out all woes and
harms.

"Love is a coin that's good in every mart,
A wine whose flavor suits the taste of all;
And love's the key that opens every heart,
Though guarded well by breastplate, shield or wall:

There is no lock it will not take apart,

No bolt not turn, no door it cannot ope, No life it cannot lift, and fill anew with hope.

"Love is the very sunlight of the soul; And all that's gloomy there her smiles destroy. She lights in every heart the lamp of joy, And fills to fullness sweet contentment's bowl. True love makes better men than do the priests, And like to men transfigures human beasts. She tempers all whose souls her smile doth reach, And turns to music soft even the harshest speech.

"When Love doth smile life is with joy replete, Our hearts revive, and once more comes delight. Yes, Love's the salt of life that keeps it sweet, And Love's the sun of life that keeps it bright, And from all clouds and chills e'er keeps us free. Love knows not time, hence Heaven's eternity; Through her fair courts the time-fiend dares not pass,

For Love his scythe hath dulled, and overturned his glass.

"Then, of all things in earth or Heaven above, Be thou our second self, oh, holy Love. Root of each thought, of every wish the fount, Coiner of all our words, prompter of acts, And ever in our lives all paramount; Remolding us aright as thou would'st wax; For nought thou doest ever is amiss.

Who loving lives lives loved and dies beloved,
All loving ones his name on earth will bless,
And nought but smiles will he in this life meet,
While saints in Heaven his gentle soul will greet
With shouts of joy divine, and welcome with a
kiss."

CANTO 3

YNDAFRENE, THE FAIR

And when the words the Scribe no longer heard,
A boat far out upon the lake appeared;
(The lake then seemed nought but the downturned sky,

So crystalline was its serenity,)
A boat like a canoe with silver geared,—
A shining crescent on a shining sea;
And in it stood a being, bright and fair,
As any that e'er trod in beauty's train;
With smile that charmed, and wealth of silken hair,

As though Astarte came to earth again, By spells of loveliness, over men's hearts to reign.

Without or sail or oar, wind, wave or tide,
That silvery boat upon that silvery lake
Toward the Scribe did by some impulse glide:
(Perchance by love 'twas done for love's own sake).

The Scribe no other thing could do but gaze:

His hand he reached unto the lady fair,-'Twas Yndafrene, maid of his Eden days! A jasmine wreath wound through her bright brown hair:

Nor other ornament, and plain her dress. Pale thought sat throned upon her brow. bride

E'er had more modesty or gentleness; And all around about, by her seemed sanctified.

Then sat they down, on what, or where, or when, He heeded not, for she was all in all. And not aught else within his thought or ken: So did her eyes his heart and soul enthrall. Awhile they talked of flowers and poetry,-For these the things her heart did love to praise: At home she seemed in their society. Then pictured he the land of Eden days; Its cloudless summers, and its shady groves, Its stars, and walks beneath its moonlit skies, Its nightingales, and cooing white sea doves. Oft did she sigh, and smile, and raise her eyes, And slightly once did turn away her head To hide her tears when he some tears had shed; But never word she spake, save what her sweet face said.

Oh, man, what is that frenzy in your brain That drives you far to wander from the sane, And makes you haunt the lonely gloomy grove? 'Tis love; 'tis nought but love. And what is love? Love is a yearning of the soul that's sore; A yearning of the heart e'en from its core; A yearning of the ears with head aside; A yearning of the eyes in pensive gaze, As though some spell the mind did partly craze,—A yearning eager, ardent, deep and wide, Such as enthralls, and draws, the moonstruck summer tide,—

For what? For any touch, or sound, or sight Of one who's all in all, and everything. Her finger's tip doth thrill him with delight, And make a thousand joy-bells in him ring; Her slightest glance his heart all captivates, And makes it flutter like a bird in cage; Her smile with ecstasies his soul elates, Like one who wins at last a heavenly heritage.

If such o'er man is love's delightful sway
What is of love the wish and will and way?
It is with gentle wishes, sweet desires,
And fondest prayers, fancy the architect,
Within some vale of flowers, free from briers,
An Eden home most lovely to erect:
Bright birds and gentle creatures roaming 'round,
And not a sight unpleasant, nor a sound,
A waterfall and rivulet near by,
And overhead the whole of Heaven's perfect sky.

Within this home, like to an angel guest,
Fairest of all fair women, sweetest, best;
Pure as that lily white in Eden's dell,
Eve's fingers plucked, ere came the serpent's
spell;

Eyes like twin Venuses within the west,
That perfect faith and tender love attest;
Cheeks like a bride's upon her wedding day;
Her brow more bright than any morn in May;
Her voice all melody; her smile pure bliss;
And blossoming all 'round rarest felicities,—

He her companion and sole minister,
Living always with her fair form in sight,
Without desire to wander otherwhere;
Her smile his sunshine and his Heaven her kiss;
She his sole thought by day, his dream by night,
Life one unending round of ecstasies,
And she sole source and center of delight.
Such would love's kingdom be had love its way,
And such its blissfulness had love its perfect
sway.

So mused the Scribe in dreamy revery; On fancy's wings his spirit floating free, All charged with love and joy, as by Euphrosyne.

CANTO 4

THE MYSTIC WREATH

The Scribe looked up, and on a hawthorn tree, (Seeming there placed all plain for him to see.) Swinging near by, appeared a worded Wreath Of Myrtle made and Laurel, both in flower; In orient pearls these lines written beneath: "Where lives and rules the Hell-born love of power

There yields and dies the Heaven-born power of love."

Just then near-by did coo a turtle dove, And on the Scribe fate fastened her decree To solve what seemed to him a mighty mystery.

The worded *Leaves*, pictures and metaphors, With all their dreams and hates, woes, loves and wars,

The Scribe interpreted as best he could,
And here their meaning gives reluctantly,
Omitting all not fully understood,
Ignoring both the meters and the rhymes,
The pictures and the mystic imagery,
But filling in some little gaps, at times;
And where his memory failed, imagining.
But oh, so faulty his interpreting
Of what appeared upon each mystic page
That his rude lines, at best, are but vile sacrilege.

The worded Wreath seemed by some poet penned, Who did upon the planet Venus dwell Awhile; then upon Mars some time did spend; And wrote of love and war, of Heaven and Hell, As with his thoughts their atmospheres did blend. Of love and Paradise the Myrtle Leaves Did tell, in words, pictures and metaphors; The Laurel of ambition told,—and griefs. Between the two somehow had come divorce: The Laurel Leaves and stems, torn off by force From their main bough, were almost wholly gone; By some design, it seemed, a few remained, And bright their words and pictures plainly shone. This Wreath the Scribe's attention soon enchained,

And in its reading and deciphering
Was all absorbed, in mind and soul and sense.
Oblivious long was he of every thing
Except the lettered *Leaves*, his thought was so intense.

As closely he the pictures scrutinized,
The Scribe saw faces like fair Yndafrene;
While some he saw like to his own, disguised;
And much he wondered what the mystery might mean.

At last a bell he heard: opening his eyes He looked around in wonder and surprise. There on that shaded mound of moss he lay, Beneath the trees, on that lake's classic shore; While Hobart's larum bell not far away Its throbbing peals upon the air did pour. He mused awhile like one who is not sure Whether awake he is, or yet asleep. Then to his ears did softer music float, And soon himself unto himself did creep,—
The mystic song of Theta Delta Chi Coming euphonious from a distant boat, Mixed in afar with some wild college cry. He looked around, and then himself surveyed, To make more certain that he was awake, And all himself,—not in some masquerade, Nor in some mystic dream 'bout Agayentah's lake.

"How fairer," thought he, "fancy is than fact, How brighter far the wish is than the act, And how divine this life on earth would be Could our bright dreams be made reality; Could we our carnal natures all divorce, From out our hearts expel the animal, Of every feeling soul the only source, And every thought be wholly spiritual;—
To ever live in love with those who love, All passions and all appetites above; Needing no food but friendship, truth and song; Our dreams and fancies then realities; Not being earthly all exempt from wrong; Sailing upon the air as on the seas;

Celestial sights and sounds, and angels fair, Making our lives all bliss beyond compare,-And She, -yes, She, forever at our side! (For then, and only then, would soul be satisfied").

Loosening his mind from what did only seem, Upon his feet slowly the Scribe did rise, Not yet recovered fully from his dream,-If dream it wholly was. Upon the skies He gazed, praying his vigor would return: So well the sorcery had his soul beguiled. But was that Wreath mere fancy's bastard child? Who further reads its mystic words will learn, Dimmed by the clouds that to his memory clings, And tinted, and enlarged, by his imaginings.



CHAPTER II

CHILDREN IN PEACE AND LOVE, SIRES IN WAR

PROEM

The Myrtle Leaves tell of a little boy and girl, with their fathers, in a city park: the children play man and wife, and vow to marry each other when grown. Pleased with this, their fathers, who are warm friends, betroth the children. In the temporary absence of their fathers the boy is severely bitten on the wrist by a dog. A croaking raven and a cooing white sea dove participate mysteriously in the scene. Soon thereafter a great war arises in the land in which the sires take a prominent part. The bloody battle of Wodenow described, in which the boy's father receives a fatal wound, after having performed prodigies of strength and valor. He is rescued by the girl's father, who is subsequently exiled by the King, as the result of slander.



CANTO 1

A BETROTHMENT IN FUN AND IN FACT

Upon this earth a city beautiful,—
Beside the sea, and near a river's mouth;
And at its wharves shone many a sea-king's hull,
That roved all waters, north and west and south,
Making the landfolk tremble when they heard
The Northmen's shout and saw the raven sign;
For far and wide did the Varangian sword
To southern landsmen deal a death malign.
But Christian priests, despising fear and death,
Kissing the cross with their last look and breath,
Had torn the altars of great Odin down,
Preaching the Christ, and oft winning a martyr's
crown.

Now, for a while, was peace on land and sea,
And sea-kings ceased to range the waters wide.
Yet of Varangian blood few veins were free,
And in great deeds of war brave men took pride.
Two such sat in that city's park one day,—
Comrades in arms, talking of war and fame;
While near at hand a boy and girl did play,
The only child of each to heir his name.
Mighty these men but differing in strain,
Legion the great, and brave Strombold the Dane;
Famous for valor both, and giantlike in frame.

Fair was each child, and full of winsomeness:
Two years the younger seemed the little girl;
But in the games they played she none the less.
"Many" his name, and her they called "My Pearl."

Husband and wife they played in innocence. "I'll husband be!" he cried; "and I'll be wife!" All laughingly said she,-with gay pretense. "And you must husband be for all your life." Then did they kiss, their vows to evidence. The while on bough o'erhead did softly coo A lovely white sea-dove,—the bird of lovers true. Watching with interest their children's play, Which in their hearts roused tender sentiments, Suggesting what might hap some distant day, E'en from such childhood sports of innocence,— (Their own spring days of love not far behind.) The sires agreed, as with a common mind, That their two children should in time be joined, As man and wife, one both in love and fate, And thus their own friendship perpetuate. Then each unto the other gave his hand, In solemn pledge that this betrothment firm should stand.

This done each one his darling child did call, And had them join their hands and promise make, That when grown up they were, all big and tall, As man and wife they would each other take. All this the children deemed the greatest fun,
And gayly laughed and jumped when it was done,
With many a hug and kiss and merry word;
All which their noble sires most gladly saw and
heard.

Just then, right overhead, a raven croaked,
As though some fate malign was thus invoked:
Whereat the father of the boy did frown,
And, as in thought, his head dropped somewhat
down.

Then went the children back unto their play,
And their contented sires went on their way,
Walking a-far, absorbed in other themes
Suited to warlike facts, and not to wedding
dreams.

While yet the children happy were in play,
Their voices merry and their spirits gay,
Lo, that vile raven angry swooped down near,
With a fierce croak and most infernal eye;
Whereat did growl and bark a hungry cur
Of vicious look that then was prowling nigh,
Thinking the children something had to eat.
Then cried the little girl in greatest fear;
But Many stamped the ground with both his feet,
And fiercely cried, "Begone, you brute! away
from here!"

Then on his arm did spring the creature vile, And drove its tushes deep into his wrist. But bravely did the boy the brute resist, And soon it ran away;—the girl meanwhile Screaming in agony of fright and grief. The boy released hastened to her relief, Taking her hand and wiping dry her tears, And doing all he could to drive away her fears.

"That wicked dog," she said, when gone the strain,

"To bite my husband so, without a cause!"

The boy, though much unnerved and suffering pain,

From both the mongrel's tushes and his claws,
Did nought thereof in any wise complain;
But like a little knight escorted her
Unto her home, which luckily was near;
And bidding her no more to fear or cry,
He wiped her eyes, and kissed her for good-by.
Then to his father's home in haste he sped,
From fierce pain in his wrist, and nervousness half dead.

Soon after this broke out the threatened war, Each side determined to be conqueror; So these two sires into the army went;— And ne'er returned: one died of battle-wounds, The other driven was to banishment; And ne'er again upon that park's play-grounds Brave Many and sweet Pearl another such day spent.

A pictured Myrtle Leaf did here portray A little boy and girl in happy play; While near the ground that croaking raven flew, In tree, close by, that white sea dove did coo, And grimly through the park that cur did seem to stray.

CANTO 2

WAR ON THE EARTH

For months the King had waged an awful war, That o'er the land had many shadows cast. A battle had been fought that far surpassed All others for a hundred years, or more. O'er miles of ground swung to and fro the fight. Thousands on thousands had been slain outright, And all the land been by the wounded filled,-Who, coming home for treatment of their wounds. Wild stories told about the numbers killed. Till town and country echoed with the bloody sounds.

Just then unto the city Strombold came, To see his wife who on her death-bed lay. Soon everywhere was heralded his name, And thousands sought him their respects to pay, For next to Legion's greatest was his fame. The Queen forthwith did bid him come to her, And all the story of the war relate.

What done at Wodenow with sword and spear, How fared the King, his army and the state, For anxious she their history to hear, Since little did she know, and very much did fear.

At once brave Strombold heeded her command. Crowded the palace was with men of state, And high-born ladies thronged on every hand, Anxious to learn some son's or husband's fate. When he had answered all who aught did ask, The Queen imposed a more laborious task, And bade him all the battle scenes relate Wherein great Legion fought before he fell, And whether true the stories some did tell How he wrought deeds of blood, that were a miracle.

Brave Strombold's eyes shone with a battle glow,
As standing high amid the audience grand
He quick obeyed her Majesty's command;
For glad was he that all the truth might know.
After telling what deeds others had wrought,
And with what valorous strength the King had
fought,

And what to all his wisdom had been worth, Legion's great deeds and death, he thus did picture forth: "We all foresaw that death was in the air,
And braced our hearts and armors for the fray,
Resolved our uttermost to do and dare,
For King, for honor's sake, and fatherland;
And fall who might upon our side that day,
Our souls did swear, with vows fore'er to stand,
Awful the bloody price, our foes would have to
pay.

"Legion flamed forth in martial ecstasy
When he beheld the coming enemy;
For open battle was his highest joy,
Like brave Achilles at the gates of Troy.
To fight for fame was his felicity.
His shield did blaze bright as the morning sun,
His helmet glittered like a meteor,
His blood-red horse-hair plume all grandly shone,
And seemed to prophesy the bloody deeds of war.

"His battle-ax he'd throw high 'bove his head,
And by its handle catch it as it fell,
(As true knights do who have for war been bred,
And in great feats of arms love to excel).
His mighty spear at arm's length would he hold,
Poised perpendicular upon his palm,
And like a hero of Varangian mold,
Sung lustily the sea-kings' thrilling battlepsalm.

"And Legion's horse, by an Arabian sired,
Harnessed for war, in battle-armor clad,
Seemed with his master's spirit all inspired.
He pawed the earth, and snorted as though mad,
Or with the battle-fury fiercely fired.
His head he often shook high in the air,
As though no bit nor bridle he'd respect,
And showed his teeth, as if to bite or tear;
His tail and main and forelock all erect,
While through his eye-balls shot a fiendish glare:
A fitting horse, indeed, the god of war to bear.

CANTO 3

THE BATTLE OF WODENOW

"Never before had such sight met the eye,
Never before such splendid chivalry.
In gorgeous armor clad the King rode by,
Surrounded by a shining company.
Halting a moment he his sword waved high,
And thus in thunder-tones to us did cry:
'My sons and brothers! Help me win this day.
The holy saints will battle on our side.
Legion I name to lead you in the fray:
You follow him wherever he doth ride.
I'll honor those who this day honor me.
Now, be your battle-cry: Legion and victory!'

"The King passed on. A hearty shout we raised,

And in the air ten thousand weapons blazed. On came the enemy—a mighty host,

Well armed and orderly, with banners high,

And every sign of hope and bravery.

Their king rode at their front—his proper post, With retinue of princes, dukes and lords,

In coats of mail, and armed with spears and swords.

All far and wide shone casque and plume and spear,—

Enough forsooth to make their gallant foemen fear.

"Just then great Legion spurred his mighty steed

Three lengths in front, and in his stirrups stood Upright, that all his face might see, and read: Then shouted he with voice of battle-god: 'Comrades! No leader this day will you need.

Each one a leader is with lion-heart,

And sworn deep in his soul to act a hero's part.

"On come our foes, to slay or make us slaves.

So puffed with pride they deem us nought but knaves.

But ere this day is done those left unslain Will deem us Paladins of Charlemagne! Now swords and axes draw, your spears hold hard,

Your maces grasp, your shields keep high on guard,

Your visors down, all fears and doubts discard. Spur deep your steeds and follow close to me. Now, on—on—on! to glory, and to victory!'

"Then with his silver trump a blast he blew That seemed to thrill the very heavens through, And filled with martial ardor every soul, Till men and horses seemed one single whole, And like an ocean wave upon the foe did roll.

CANTO 4

LEGION'S MIGHTY CHARGE

"Seeing their king amid their cavalcade Towards him straightway an onslaught Legion made.

Pale turned the king, when Legion first he saw,
And from its scabbard forth his sword did draw,
While all about his life-guards gathered thick.
But Legion heeded not; his steed he spurred,
And with his ax, striking like lightning quick,
He brained the king, who fell lifeless without a
word.

"Ten thousand foemen rallied to their king, With mighty shouts, not knowing he was dead; While we poured forth a host to Legion's aid, Making the heavens with our war-cries ring. Far fiercer then than any time before The battle raged around the fallen king, And like a very hell, the awful rush and roar.

"Just then of Legion did I get a glimpse,-Like lion struggling 'gainst a wolfish horde, Or Michael warring 'gainst the devil's imps;-While o'er his head a croaking raven soared. Gone was his brand and battered was his shield; And oft his steed from deep wounds fiercely squealed;

But his huge battle-ax he whirled around, And every foe, in reach, did frighten, kill or wound.

"Bidding my comrades follow quickly on, (For then or never, would the fight be won), Without waiting to take an extra breath, My spurs I thrust into my horse's flanks; And though it seemed like going unto death, Headlong I plunged into their nearest ranks. Oh, with an awful fury was I crazed,— Such as in war Varangians often feel, Like what 'tis said inspired Berserker's zeal. Some foemen stood aside as though amazed, Others were crushed beneath my ax, or horse's heel.

"While for his rescue all my spirit yearned,
Towards our ranks Legion his face now turned,
All red with streaming blood, as though to see
If we'd deserted him. This made of me
A very fiend. Deeper I spurred my steed,
And through the hostile ranks, we rushed with
tempest speed.

"The foe gave way. At Legion's side I stopped. Gone was his helmet, and he blind with blood. Wounded to death his horse his head had dropped.

dropped.

No more our troops the enemy withstood.

Legion then sunk upon my saddle-bow:
As best I could I did his body brace.

He looked at me, a faint smile on his face,
As though his love and gratitude to show.

Just then his horse lifted and turned his head,
At Legion gazed, then groaned, and fell down—

dead.—

As though not from his wounds alone he died, But grief that him, no more, his master would bestride.

"The rest you know: how Legion we did nurse; How day by day he sunk from bad to worse; How father John did all his sins forgive, And fit his noble soul for God on high; How as a hero he did grandly live,
So as a Christian he did grandly die:
Too great for earth was he,—fit only for the sky."

Great Strombold bowed his head, and gave a groan,—

So awful was his agony of soul;
While in his loyal eyes great tear-drops shone:
His grief too deep and strong for his control.
Then burst the Queen in tears,—and all did weep
For mighty Legion dead, and pray to Christ
That in his bosom Legion's soul might sleep,
Since for his country he himself had sacrificed.

A picture on a Leaf did Legion show
Battling like god of war against the foe,
Over his head a raven circling low;
While near at hand did fight, Strombold, the
Dane,

And all about them lay the wounded, and the slain.

CANTO 5

STROMBOLD BORNE DOWN BY SLANDER

Slander a coward is, of instincts base, And never speaks till one his back doth turn; But truth is bold, and speaketh face to face, And doth both flattery and scandal spurn. Strombold at hand, none dared speak aught but praise;

For brave and truthful, and in honor done,
Were all his words and deeds: no nobler son
Had chivalry in her most glorious days.
Wherever right did point thither he went.
Indeed, of him it would be better said
Where'er he went thither would right have sent,
For when in doubt her path right off by him was
led.

As from a crystal fount flow waters pure, And flow none other can, so Strombold's heart No thought could think, no sentiment endure, But what was right, honor's true counterpart. Of valor born, his words by truth perfumed, In stature lofty, and in aspect grand, His intellect by conscience all illumed, By nature was he born, for counsel and command.

In court and camp to Legion next he stood;
And his equality so very near
They seemed like twins in all things great and good,

So that to most no difference did appear:
In truth the royal crown the only thing
That did his glory dim, when stood he near the
King.

Whate'er he thought true honor did approve,
Whate'er he said all wished to hear again,
Where'er he went all eyes to him did move,
Whate'er he did all voices said amen.
The friend of all who friendship's grip deserved,
The foe of all who had from honor swerved,
In all the land there was no greater chief:
Such mighty Strombold was, the Count of Fedmer
Fief.

Urged by a startling message from his wife,
That she was lying near to death's dark door,
And loving her beyond his very life,
Without waiting the King's leave to procure,
Away to visit her had Strombold gone;
Because delay he could not then endure,
Grief striving hard his reason to dethrone.
Great Legion dead, the apple of his eye,
His wife most ill and unto death so nigh,
These mighty ties of love his soul could not abjure.

Forthwith his secret enemies did hint Unto the King that Strombold treason meant, Seeking of Legion's death to make some gain; Leaving the camp without the King's consent, While yet not wholly ended the campaign. Thinking that instant action was the best, The King forthwith did issue his commands That Strombold should be put in close arrest, And forfeit to the State his serfs and lands; And lest some other treason he might make The King, in wrath, still further did ordain That Strombold should the kingdom all forsake, And exiled be, afar, to island Redenfayn.

But ere these fatal orders to him came
His darling wife he'd laid in grassy grave;
And nothing more to him were wealth and fame:
Full chance to grieve was all his heart did crave.
Taking his little daughter by her hand
Proudly he bowed unto the King's command;
And with such wealth as did to him remain,
And Jux, a faithful serf, set sail for Redenfayn.

Brave Strombold on a gloomy Leaf appeared, In cobble boat, sailing upon the sea, A little girl his voyage greatly cheered; A faithful serf their only company. The main land lost to sight, but looming plain In front, with rocky walls, the island Redenfayn.

CHAPTER III

THINGS OF THE EARTH, THE AIR, AND THE SKY

PROEM

A Youth comes to view, of noble lineage, but resting under a bloody curse, imposed at Baldurbane, that all the men of his house should fall in battle, a raven acting as an avenger. The fact of this curse, and that his father had died of battle-wounds, and that his mother had died of grief, coupled with memories of the girl to whom he had been betrothed, caused him to indulge in gloomy thoughts and reveries, during which he had visions of a beautiful Maid. In some mysterious way an Angel takes very special interest in this Youth, and determines to lead him to the girl to whom he had been betrothed. While on the quest of her he reaches the shore of the ocean. The Leaves contain many pictures, illustrating the text.

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CANTO 1

AN ORPHANED YOUTH

THE war had passed, nor harmed the kingdom was;

The King triumphant o'er his enemies,
Ruling his realm with wisdom and applause.
Glory and peace, honor and wealth were his,
Revered his mighty throne, and honored all his
laws.

Within this realm, (so read the Myrtle Leaves), There dwelt a Youth, destined for joys and griefs

Beyond the fortune far of common men;—
And deep and keen, indeed, had been his ken,
Surpassing that of human sage or seer,
Who could have e'en, in part, foretold his strange
career.

His lineage how noble and how long, How often told in story and in song; His form how manly, and his brow how high, How great his wealth and with what titles blest, His arm how mighty, and how brave his eye, Never an angel asks: the heart's the test,
The touchstone true of what is worst and best,
And intellect, though much by some adored,
Unless the soul is good, is but a sword
In madman's hand,—a power to be deplored;
And worldly wealth, though more than Ophir's
mines,

Compared with probity, less than a glow-worm shines.

Yet noble was his blood, and great his name. Of wounds in battle had his father died,— A hero great in valor and in fame, Whose deeds his race and country glorified. His mother fair of face, of soul so sweet, Of thought so gentle, and of word so kind, Her nature seemed, indeed, the holy seat Of all the virtues that the angels left behind.

In grief for her dear lord, loved all so dear, No longer from his side content to stay, With many a sigh and moan and bitter tear, She from the earth, heart-broken, passed away, Longing in peace to rest, beside his precious clay.

Thus orphaned in his youth, a tutor grim, His sole companion, only served to dim What thoughts and fancies bright, and prospects gay, Their charms at times would to his eyes display. Cut off from other youths from infancy, And schooled where seldom others he did see, He ever happier was, when from all others free.

Yet in his heart were thoughts of high emprise. The grand he loved and the spectacular, And visions had he of the pageantries Of marching hosts and the triumphal car In conquering Rome's ovation-jubilees, When songs were sung and war-whoops shook the sky;—

Of kings he dreamed with gorgeous retinues, Processions long with banners waving high, Music entrancing and most splendid views,— And all things else that pleased the fancy, ear and eye.

For jousting fields he yearned, and tournaments; Their stirring scenes and wide magnificence, Where knights met knights like hostile meteors, While all around, from stands and booths and tents,

A thousand plaudits hailed the conquerors, Fair ladies casting forth their gloves and flowers

With sweetest smiles their knights to recompense; Bright pageants meanwhile shining everywhere, And all the glories, grand, of King and kingdom there.

Of shocks of battle he did love to hear,
When hero hero met in deadly strife,
Equipped with helmet, shield and sword or spear,
On harnessed horses mounted, full of life;
When far and wide the battle lines were spread,
When everywhere were piled the slaughtered
dead,

Till thousands fell beneath the hand of war, While all the world acclaimed the conqueror: For all of these stirred up dear memories Of mighty Legion-deeds, and Legion-destinies.

CANTO 2

THE BAN OF BALDURBANE

His home and heritage, weird Shonbirg Hall,
Well fitted was by nature and by fame
His mind with the mysterious to inflame;
So grim its mighty moat and towered wall.
For many years no lights within had shone
And there but owls and bats a home did own,
While on its towers the blackest ravens croaked,
As though upon the Hall some vengeance they invoked.

The legend was that in long ages past, When pagan curses could men's fortunes blast, Upon the battle ground of Baldurbane, Where all the earth was covered by the slain,

Where his great name the Youth's ancestor won By deeds of strength none other e'er had done, (Such was his wondrous valor and his might), Legion, the First, just at the battle's height, In awful combat, viewed by all amazed, Cut through and through a great Varangian chief.

Whereat the dead man's mother, wild with grief, And by despair and anguish wholly crazed, When nought her awful frenzy would assuage, With her dead hero's blood her hands she dved; And lifting them to heaven in her rage, (Her long hair loose, and floating wild and wide), The gods of earth and sea and sky implored, And all the demons 'neath the earth that were, In her behalf to draw the fateful sword. Dire vengeance to inflict on her son's murderer.

"And thee I curse, and all thy sons I curse!" She cried with flaming eyes and visage fierce, (Her bloody hands still lifted to the sky). "Cut down in blood shall every Legion die While yet in youth, till one by shaft of pearl Shot through the heart by a Varangian's hand, Shall cease the sword to swing, the spear to hurl, And like a saint preach peace through all the land.

Till then my curse on thee shall ne'er be broke,
Nor o'er thy house the raven cease to croak.
Oh, father Odin, hearken to my ban,
And bloody vengeance wreak on Legion, and his
clan!"

Just then a mighty raven o'er the field Most fiercely croaked, while round and round it wheeled

O'er Legion's head, as though it fain would wound.

By woman's cries and raven's croaks appalled, Forthwith both armies from the bloody ground Retired, as though by Odin's voice recalled, Out of respect for holy motherhood. So from that fateful day Legion, the First,

And all his lineage had died in blood

While yet in youth, on battle-field thrice pierced;—

Surpassing all in strength that 'gainst them stood,

Victims of that Varangian mother's curse;—
Mourned by the King, the noble and the good:
And Shonbirg Hall, since then, had gone from bad to worse.

So read the *Leaves*, and so the pictures were: Legion, the mother wild, and Odin's messenger.

CANTO 3

A MAID OF THE AIR.

The Youth roamed not alone: all shadow-like, Whether he was asleep, or wide awake, A Maid most beautiful seemed ever near, His sighs to witness, and his words to hear. When on some mossy bank, or log or rock, Alone he sat in silent revery, She gazed into his soul in sympathy-Or seemed to gaze; for, whether she did mock, Or creature really was whom he some day Would surely meet and wed,—his own in bliss for ave;

Or whether she a spirit was of air, Commissioned to console and gratify; Or whether she fancy's own fiction fair, Born in the secret chamber of his brain; Or whether she a faint sweet memory Of one he'd met as child, but ne'er again, Daughter, some said, of a Varangian Dane, To whom he'd been betrothed by his great sire;-He'd no assurance that did trust inspire; But took her as she seemed without gainsay; For her sweet face, and smile, his griefs did charm away.

All lovely things did hint of her, somehow:
The sleeping lake was placid like her brow,
The evening star had eye and face like hers.
Each flowering vine his thoughts of her did wreathe;

The fragrant zephyrs from balsamic firs
A tale of love and her did seem to breathe;
The billowy music of the storm-swept sea
His thoughts of her changed to a happier key.
The lightning's vivid flash so sudden near,
And instant with the thunder's crashing roar,
To him were joys devoid of every fear,
Nor cared he much e'en when the rains did pour;
For then somehow she nearer, dearer, seemed:
All happy was his soul, when thus of her he dreamed.

Near-growing trees whose arms were interwove, Their foliage, flowers and fragrance all combined,

Waving their boughs in unison and love, Seeming more happy since thus all entwined; And making music like Æolian chords Swept by the viewless fingers of the breeze; E'en more than mystic signs, or sweetest words, Told of unselfish love's own ecstasies.

Darkness and silence gave his spirit power; So night, loved by but few whose deeds are true, By him was loved as his most sacred hour: Then roved his soul that mystic region through Where that which seems and that which is are one,

And with his spirit-love held sweet communion.

Oft in his moody visions that fair girl To whom he'd been betrothed would come to mind:

And wondered he whither her sire, the Earl, Had strangely gone, and where her he could find. But though their home to know he'd often sought, Nought but a mystery his questions brought: Their answers tended but his eyes to blind, (And so, in secret, were they all designed); Yet, deep within his soul, they spells of romance wrought.

What is that subtle something that flows forth From out the heart and masters all the brain? That to our nature gives a gentler birth, And puts new vigor into every vein? That sets new springs of strength beneath each foot,

And makes one walk as though upon the air? That in the soul doth nobler notions put, And prompts one quicker for the poor to care? That makes one's spirit light and pure and free, As scented air that floats from groves of Araby? What is that magic power that tints the cheeks, And adds a brighter luster to the eye? That in our voice in softer accents speaks, And makes us linger longer in good-by? That music hears in every breeze that blows, And perfume smells in every flower that's fair? That puts new beauty in each thing that grows, And fills with brighter stars the upper air? That softens e'en the visage hard of vice, And in a desert finds a Paradise? That Heaven draws more near unto the earth, And to the human soul, gives a diviner birth?

'Tis love, love, love, that gift of Heaven above,
Of every joy and ecstasy inwove.
When from fair Eden God our parents drove,
'Twas borne away for man, by Eve's pet turtle
dove.

CANTO 4

AN ANGEL OF THE SKY

This Youth by a bright Angel was beloved, And in his soul she sowed her subtle seeds, Where'er his footsteps led close by she roved. Her love, unlike some loves of mortal maids, No taint of clay, no spice of selfishness Did have; its only aim to guide and bless. Never a thrill of earthly bliss had she; No thought of mortal love's felicity The holy chamber of her soul could reach: Her love too saintly was t' express in human speech.

Knowing that spirit-love is too refined, Too much an excitation of mere mind, A heart of flesh and blood to satisfy; (Such are the bonds that human beings bind); And that ideal love would surely die, Or make the heart and soul with frenzy sick, Or in the brain derangement generate, And of a lover make a lunatic, This Angel did a deep scheme fabricate To lead the Youth back to that lovely Maid, (With whom in childhood he'd so fondly played), And fill his soul with visions of her face, Till he the land would search from place to place, And even o'er the mighty ocean rove, For her, the Maid, who won his boyhood's love, Using, for medium, a gentle white sea dove.

In Paradise congenial hearts are bred, And there in bliss their morn of life is spent; And Paradise is where such hearts are wed. For every youth there is a maiden born,— His perfect counterpart and complement: And should they chance to meet in life's bright morn,

They harmonize in action, wish and thought, And love at sight; their souls together brought, Like drops of honey in the lily's heart Combine in love as one, never in life to part.

But if to meet they fail they wander wide,
Seeking the love they've somehow been denied;
And if her having met to wed they fail,
Forevermore her loss he doth bewail.
With balms, of tears and loving sighs distilled,
Her memory he preserves, with perfumes filled,
Adoring it as priest adores a saint,
Perfect in face and soul, and free from every
taint.

When thoughts of her bright blossom in his heart, Forthwith she looms all lovely to his view; At him she looks with smiles which tears bedew; Then with keen pangs his inmost soul doth smart, And grief's convulsions shake him through and through.

Laments he, then, that perchance his neglect Her peace and his somehow forever wrecked; While she, in turn, like flower whose growth is checked,

Her head hangs low, and pines her life away; For though without love's warmth a man may bide,

And like an animal some joy display,

Ever is woman's heart unsatisfied Unless the man she loves is loving at her side.

The Youth we know, him and his home we've seen; The Maid he dreams of lives from him afar, While waves of ocean darkly roll between, And honor's rule betwixt them puts a bar, Forbidding love or law their hearts to link: So destined they to wed, no man would ever think.

But that will happen which an angel plans, However hopeless if the scheme were man's. Whate'er she wishes some day will be truth, Despite the waves and rules that intervene. So she and he, the Maiden and the Youth, According as the Angel has foreseen, Will meet, when bursts the bud into the flower, And strikes the clock of fate, at noon's high hour, That destined day; and after grief and pain All happily will wed, bound by love's golden chain.

Oh, could we see, traced on the page of fate, The turns and twists, the mazes caused by foes, Since day of birth, made by the feet of those Who as affinities do meet and mate,

(Like story told by poet of his dream Of love and bliss), more marvelous 'twould seem That they by accident alone did meet Than that some angel kind had steered their wandering feet.

Thrilling indeed the spectacle would be
Of two such beings, dwelling far apart,
And sundered quite by what seemed fate's decree,—

Not e'en a gossamer from heart to heart;
Each moving hither, thither, to and fro,
Now drawing nearer, now more far they go,
Until at last, what fills one with amaze,
(Unless decreed by mighty powers above),
Their steps do meet, and face to face they gaze
Into each other's eyes,—and gazing—love.
Thenceforth their lives all one in deed and
thought,

As magnets firmly join when closely brought.
So, from the Myrtle Leaves the Scribe did read,
Unless some dream his spirit did mislead;
For in his soul were thoughts of Yndafrene,
Mixed up with what he'd read, and what in pictures seen.

CANTO 5

THE YOUTH'S QUEST FOR HIS MAID

In Shonbirg Hall the Youth no more could rest.

"My soul is all bound up as in a dream,"

He said; "and go I must upon my quest.

My spirit seems to see a mystic scheme

Whereby my life and race will both be blessed,—

And gone to nought that ban of Baldurbane,

When my betrothed I wed, the daughter of the Dane."

Long wandered he and far, leaving behind His Hall and heritage, and all most dear, Hoping somewhere some trace of her to find,—Not knowing whether far she was, or near, Traveling less by his sight than by his mind. And when his heart from weariness grew faint Thus poured he forth aloud, his loving soul's sad plaint:

THE YOUTH'S PLAINT

"A spell upon my soul doth rest
That onward must I go,
Doomed everywhere to make my quest
In spite of friend and foe,—
Heedless of weal and woe.

"For I to her my love did pledge,
And promised her to wed;
And it would be gross sacrilege
To take some other maid,—
And thus my troth evade.

"So, not on land my feet can rest,
Nor yet upon the sea,
Until my darling's hand I've pressed,
And on my bended knee
Have told my loving plea.

"And ever must I wander on
In search of her my love,
(Where'er doth shine the sun or moon),
My fealty to prove,—
Though o'er the world I rove.

"And when at last her face I see,
And hear her loving voice,
Fulfilled will be love's sweet decree;
And having found my choice
I'll evermore rejoice."

And as he wandered on he thus did pray:
"Oh, sun, shed light upon my path by day,
That I may hasten on, nor go astray.
Oh, moon, aid me when comes the dark of night,
So I may journey still, and go aright.
Oh, all ye saints, who all true lovers love,

And all ye angels of pure pity made, Send forth to guide me in my quest a dove, That I go ever straight, and never be delayed."

And as he prayed behold, a dove appeared,—
White as the foam that glitters on the sea,
And bowed, and cooed, and high its wings upreared;

Then flew ahead in view from tree to tree,
As though on high his earnest prayer was heard.
Then in his soul he felt a conjury,
As though no longer was his will quite free.—
That dove his constant guide, his footsteps reached the sea.

The Leaves pictured a Youth, by love distraught, But guided by a cooing dove, all white, Through a wide wilderness all safely brought Unto the ocean's shore,—a small boat, plain in sight,



CHAPTER IV

THE SEA OF MATTER, AND THE AIR OF MIND

PROEM

The Youth, wandering under the influence of a spell in search of her to whom he had been betrothed, embarks upon the sea, at night. While sleeping his spirit-love, in the form of that Angel descends upon a star-beam, and communes with him most tenderly. This dream is, in some mysterious way, to be realized, through the agency of that Angel. While the Youth yet dreams an awful storm comes on, and the Youth and his boat are overwhelmed by the winds and the waves. Some mystic signs on the Leaves encourage the Scribes's hope of Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

THE YOUTH AFLOAT UPON THE SEA

That strange spell led this moody Youth away
To search the world for her he owned in pledge,
(And who owned him), since their betrothal day;
And now he'd reached the great land's furthest
edge,

And in his front the ocean, broad and bare.

A boat he found, and launched it on the tide.

Warm was the night, but cool the ocean air;

And solitude was reigning far and wide,

O'er all the sea and all along its coast.

Resting at ease soon was he wholly lost

In the weird mazes of deep reveries.

Above, nought but the sky-blue canopy,

Around, nought but the tender summer breeze,

Below, nought but the broad breast of the sea

Bearing the lonely boat, as though in sympathy.

Upward in dreamy thought he turned his eye:
Ten thousand stars were floating in the sky.
"How sweet and bright must be you Heavenhome."

He thought. "There lives my love, my spiritbride,

And hither unto me doth often come. Perchance this night I'll have her by my side. But look! how you star shines! so brilliantly. Oh, blessed star, why shine so bright above? Her home may be, and through its tapestry Upon the earth at me, she looks in gentle love.

"How vast and grand that star-gemmed sapphire dome!

Oh, happy earth to have so fair a sky
To cheer thy heart, and beautify thy home.
Through those celestial halls the scraphs fly,
God's daughters,—born the first, beloved the
most,

Of all that infinite angelic host,
With whom no other creatures can compare—
A saintly sisterhood, divinely fair.
Perchance my love is in their company,—
The darling of my dreams, or memory.
Oh, all ye angels of the air and sky,
Ye kind divinities that glorify
The true, and beautiful, guard her from harms,
And shield her safely round, with your bright
wings and arms.

"But see, it moves! that bright star surely moves! Now do I know that me it really loves.
Oh, hear my prayer all ye celestials true,
Who hang your love-lamps in yon boundless blue,
And by your thoughts alone sweet music make;
Tell me, I pray, if there she be with you.
Oh, I am frenzied: how my heart doth quake!

I swear it comes! Oh, star so fair to view! Thy crystal beams how exquisitely bright! Nearer it comes and plainer to my sight; Unto my soul herself she doth reveal! 'Tis she! my very own! I see, and hear, and feel."

Upon a beam of brightest brilliancies, Wherein all heavenly colors seemed to meet, Down slowly moved the star, 'mid harmonies Of many notes, all infinitely sweet,-Till none could tell whether the melodies That radiance made, or else that radiance bright Did make the melodies, in all degrees, So fused in one the music and the light,— Like choristers of flame whose shining glees Thrill, rise and fall, as when the crystal pines, That crown the lofty moonlit Apennines, Swayed by soft zephyrs from the summer seas, Fill all the upper skies with sweetest symphonies.

Oh, what a flood of joy deluged his soul, And through his frame in rapturous waves did

When from the light and melody forth shone An Angel's radiant form,—his spirit's own! Into his arms she flew. Oh, bliss divine, Never before on earth by mortals known. His arms around her form he did entwine, And happy he as saint, fresh crowned beside the throne.

Upon her lips he pressed a frenzied kiss,
The while he gazed far down her love-lit eyes,
His senses all were thrilled with ecstasies,
And Paradise came down, from out the shining
skies.

But demons hate all human bliss to view,
While gentle spirits love such things to heed;
So high o'erhead a raven croaking flew,
But on the boat a white sea dove did coo;
As though a fiend did curse, an angel plead:
So on the Myrtle Leaves, the Scribe did read,—
Their words on Venus writ, and hence most true,
indeed.

CANTO 2

A DREAM OF BLISS TO BE FULFILLED

Charmed by his dream the Youth in sleep did bide.

Such was his bliss, his heart so satisfied, Willing was he to dream eternally. Whether in body or in spirit he, Did matter not, nor wish had he to know,—Wholly contented he to have things ever so.

At last, awakened by an insect's sting—
(How bliss may ended be by some slight thing)!
His eyes he oped, as on another world;
And looking out beheld the sky and sea

Around, below and overhead, unfurled; So like each seemed the other's effigy;— And so bewildered were his eyes and mind The sea and sky seemed into one combined, What he did see and what he yet did feel, His dreams and sights, all so identical, Well satisfied was he to take them all as real.

"Oh, do I dream, or am I full awake?
But if a dream, oh, then, so dear a dream
I'd sleep eternally for its sweet sake,—
And dream and dream,—and wish no other life,
For oft less good what is than what doth seem:
So full the actual is of hate and strife."
Then sighed the Youth, bewildered in extreme.
"A dream it was that is a prophesy;
And forecasts things that surely are to be:
A vision too in part a memory,"
Answered a voice. "On earth dreams oft deceive.

Upon one's brow his hand some demon lays, And specter-like through fancy's devious ways Throng many artful dreams that fabrications weave. "But sometimes angels come, and on the brain Paint scenes where love and beauty ever reign In summer lands, near unto Paradise,—
Where music, flowers and song forever chime,
Where is no death, no sorrow and no vice,
Where every thought's a joy, and life a bliss sublime."

Then ceased the voice: his Angel 'twas that spoke;
And great the blessing she did there invoke
Upon his soul, while love did have its sway.
Her white sea dove gave forth a gentle coo;
Weary of waiting for the Youth as prey,
Croaking in wrath away a raven flew.
Then closed the Youth his eyes, and slumber
stole

On tip-toe till it touched his raptured soul,
And things of earth no longer did he heed:
So to the hopeful Scribe the Myrtle Leaves did
read.

Some mystic signs and cyphers magical,
That here upon the Leaves were dimly seen,
Unto the Scribe somehow did seem to mean,
That what did then seem insurmountable,
Between himself and lovely Yndafrene,
Would some day disappear, and nothing intervene.

CANTO 3

MORNING ON THE OCEAN

Morn dawned upon the waves: old ocean moved His monstrous billows very drowsily, (As though all exercise he disapproved). By lengthened sleep seemed dulled his huge gray

And when his bosom swelled he seemed to sigh. His daughters' sea-grass lutes, all loosely strung Down in the deeps mouned forth a dismal song;-And slothfulness all sounds, and motions did prolong.

But in the east the mountains were awake, And reared their old gray heads high in the sky To greet the lord of light, and offering make, Their humble homage thus to testify. After their morning prayers and parting words, Out from the rocks and trees the early birds Flew forth with mates, to seek their morning fare.

On dusky wings, high through the upper air, A selfish raven sneaked its lonely way, Like evil fiend caught absent from his lair, Seeking dark refuge from the searching gaze of day.

More deeply blushed the earth: her lord was near. Cheerless he'd left her through the long dark night,

Although unto her heart so very dear; But now he'd come again and brought the light. So blushes the fair bride, when in their bed Her bridegroom wakes, and lifting up his head Down on her bends in love his happy eyes, Rejoicing that he'd won so beautiful a prize.

Up rose the sun; and on the waking earth Planted a kiss which filled her face with beams, And roused her children unto deeds of mirth. Over the mountains' tops the sun's bright gleams Dart gamboling through the air, and gaily smite Old ocean's wrinkled face like sprites of light,—And day at last was on: so did the *Leaves* recite.

But see! far o'er the farthest wave a boat,—
A little boat,—a mere speck on the sea,—
That up and down all idly seems to float,
As though not bound by man's nor fate's decree.
With face upturned the Youth sleeps on its prow:
His mission what? whence had he sailed? and how?

Here seemed indeed a darksome mystery,
To which as yet, at hand, there was no certain
key.

Above the mountains rose the car of day, All brightly burnished for its daily round, And rolled mid dust of fire, with grand display; But unlike cars of earth, without a sound; While in his royal robes of dazzling gold, Which far and wide through heaven he did unfold.

The lord of light his majesty upreared, And with his radiant smiles, sky, land and ocean cheered.

The clouds affrighted fled unto the north, And o'er the mountains closed their mighty wings; As if with sullen feelings for the earth. The winds that all night long, with shiverings Had left the land and sought the warm-faced seas.

To dally there, and gambol at their ease, Came sneaking back, and crept among the trees. The joy of morn seemed every heart to fill, And land and sea and air, with jubilees did thrill.

CANTO 4

PORTENTS OF A TEMPEST ON THE SEA

As though forced in and out of monstrous caves Still slowly rose and sunk the mighty waves, Still brightly beamed with splendors manifold, High up, the sun's great shield of blazing gold.

Then to the ear did come mysterious sounds,
As if the earth and sky had grievous wounds.
A skulking moan seemed vagrant 'long the lee,
Up through the sky a low and hollow boom
Forebodingly did roam; while from the sea,
Afar, faint rumblings came, and mutterings of
gloom.

Above the northern waves a black cloud peeps:
Homeward the seine-boat turns; its sheltered stay
The sea-bird seeks upon the rocky steeps;
The snipe flies o'er the land; and far away
The pirate ship takes refuge in a bay,
And sinks her ponderous anchors in the deeps,
Preparing for a storm: so sinners gray
The wrath of Heaven dread, and doom of judgment day!

Far o'er the sea still floats that puny boat,—
Devoid of mast or sail, rudder or oar.
Still sleeps the dreaming Youth: to him all nought

The portents of the sky, of sea and shore.

Beyond the stars his mind, his spirit's thought
Is in another world, in bliss his soul:

His heart's desire at last has reached its happy
goal.

The sun's bright beams are rusting in the air; That gloomy cloud on the horizon far O'er half the sky has spread, with awful scowl, Dark'ning both land and sea. A helpless thing Old ocean seems,-no arm, nor leg, nor wing; No weapon of defense, except to howl. Weary and weak the sun forsakes the sky, And e'en the light grows dim as though to die, Leaving the earth to struggle in the dark. On distant rocks the grim sea-lions bark. Zigzag against the winds a lonely crow Towards the land flies with a caw of woe: While marshalled southward through the upper air

A flock of long-necked swans to safer haunts repair.

As if some demon fierce his shaft did fling, A jagged flash shoots downward, splintering, And casts a lurid glare on sea and shore. The waves' sepulchral sobs, the winds' sad moans, Reaching afar in dirge-like monotones, Sound dolefully. Below hoarse thunders roar, As though to shake away earth's under-props, While lightnings smite the lofty mountain tops. Dungeoned in darkness is the vanquished sun, And earth in somber garb, is clad like graygowned nun.

CANTO 5

AN OCEAN STORM

A flash! the world is all one blood-like blaze!
Horror of horrors! most stupendous crash!
As though the heavens and the earth did clash.
The rock-built mountains tremble in amaze,
As o'er their heads that fiery saber sweeps;
The ocean shudders down through all its deeps,
And nature's every band, and bolt, and truss,
Cracks far and wide, with roars obstreperous.
All space is shocked by such unbounded boom,
As though God's angel blowed earth's hour of
final doom.

His fiery lances hurling from on high,
(Amid the darkness which his form enshrouds),
Abroad in awful wrath, through earth and sky,
In his huge chariot of blackest clouds,
The Storm-Fiend rides,—in awful majesty:
His maddened steeds the dreadful hurricanes,
Devoid of bridles, bits or guiding reins,—
From all encumbrance and discretion freed,
And lashed by lightnings into mutiny,
Like frenzied demons, with terrific speed,
Rush all resistless over land and sea,
Trampling to ruins all beneath their hoofs,
As if exempt from punishments,—or e'en reproofs.

Upon down grades his ponderous chariot's wheels Like awful thunders through the heavens roar, With echoes dire, that leap from shore to shore, And fill the world with their obstreperous peals. The roadways seem to sparkling fragments ground,

And earth and sky crack wide through every bound.

Most terrible the direful spectacle, (Like Satan driving through black clouds in Hell).

Filling with horrors birds and beasts and men; And everything on earth a denizen, While death and havor whoop in fiendish glee. Uprooting all things once deemed fixed on land and sea.

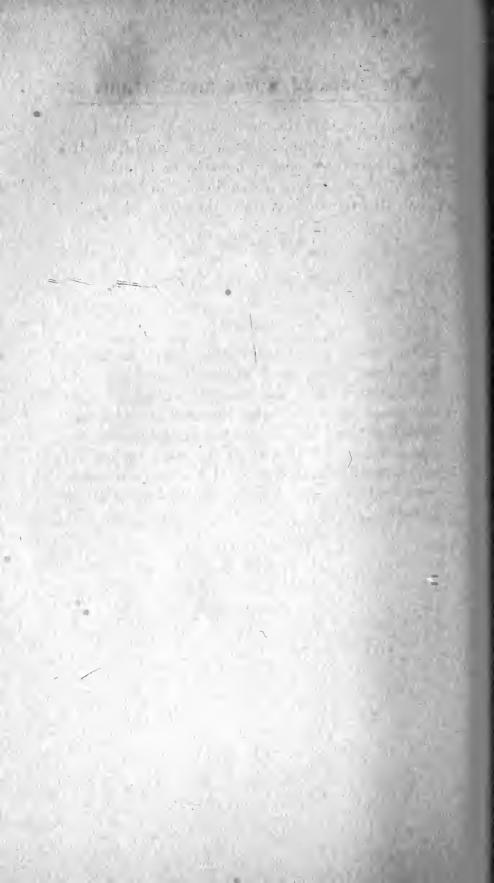
Far o'er the waves yet floats that tiny boat: Compared with all about it seems a mote. Around, nought but the vengeful hurricane, Above, nought but black sky and angry rain, Below, nought but the dark and billowy main. The Youth, unconscious of the dangers nigh, (As though his soul all terrors did defy), Still in the mazes of his dreams did keep, With rapture filled, like one in Paradise asleep. The final battle of the elements
Seems on, in fury ruthlessly intense.
In fiery wrath lightnings on lightnings flash;
With peal and roar thunders on thunders crash
Like Hell's artillery. Each strives to rule,—
Tornado, lightning, thunder, wave and rain,
As void of conscience as the vilest ghoul;
And Chaos hails his kingdom come again.
But see! the boat! struck by a whirlwind's wings.
The Youth awakes, and looks for help—in vain:
That ban of Baldurbane its awful vengeance springs.

Billows immense bombard the rocky shore,
In awful rage and with tremendous might.
Unceasingly the winds and waters roar
Like demon lions warring in the night.
Behold, a shore is near,—the rocky shore
Of island Redenfayn. Oh, terrible!
That mighty mountain-monster of the storm,
Vast in proportions, hideous in form,
With mouth as huge and horrible as Hell,
Devoureth everything, as in the Maelstrom's well.

The curtain falls,—and darkness most profound Upon the viewless world closes around. But there that Angel is, and history weaves, Making events for threads: so read the Myrtle Leaves.

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The picture that the Scribe did most attract
Portrayed the wakened Youth within his boat,
By some grim monster 'bout to be attacked;
While close above a raven black did float;
And all around, in wrath, the storm the waters
smote.



CHAPTER V

THE DAWN OF LOVE

PROEM

The storm casts the Youth upon the isle of Redenfayn, where lived Strombold, in exile, with his daughter, who has her first dream of love. She muses about the lover she saw in her dream. Strolling along the strand the morning after the storm, by the aid of a white sea dove, she discovers the shipwrecked Youth, still alive, and ministers to him. The *Leaves* continue to hint of Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

THE LORD OF REDENFAYN

While raged this awful and colossal war
Of earth and air, of sea and shore, afar
And near, the world one boundless battle-pit,
Upon his couch in room of rock half lit,
Dire dreams of Hell thick thronging through his
brain.

Asleep lay Strombold, Lord of Redenfayn.
While nestling on the floor, close to his side,
Her hands in his, her head upon his arm,
By that dire tempest greatly terrified
His daughter prayed for safety from all harm.
Her face an opal seemed glowing with light,
As though her saintly soul did shine full half in
sight.

But with the night the tempest too had gone;
On Redenfayn bright was the morning's dawn;
Yet had not ceased old ocean's battering shocks
Upon the little island's sturdy rocks;
And still afar was heard the thunder's roar.
Amid the restless surf and on the shore
Were fragments of the wrecks and ravage dire
The storm had wrought. Early arose the Sire,—
The Lord of Redenfayn,—in loose but rich attire.

Displaying nature's signs of those who're great, Long-bearded and gray-haired, but tall and straight,

Stalwart and strong; half priest, half warrior,
Did he appear; half human, half divine,
Suited for marshal, dean, or counselor,
The badge of empire on his brow did shine,
As though placed there by some divine decree:
Such was his grandeur and his majesty.
He early rose to see what mighty rents
On sea and shore that war of elements
Had made, for in his heart was grievous doubt
If nature 'gainst such strains, and shocks, could
well hold out.

Beside him stood the Maid, as angel fair,—
A creature less of earth than sky and air.
"Oh, child," he said; "was ever such a storm,
Since that dire day when Eve and Adam fell?
If demons be, goblins and fiends of Hell,
That deeds of vengeance on this earth perform,
Stir up the thunder, lightning, wind and rain,
And make bad dreams the minds of men to pain,
Then loose was every devil turned last night
His uttermost to do the earth to smite,
And mortals make to feel, inopportune,
The pangs of Hell while yet alive, and so immune.

"Why earth's frame was not wholly overthrown; Land, sea and sky, the water, earth and air, All in one monstrous mass of wreckage blown, Beyond all restoration or repair, Of all my mortal life will ever be Its greatest problem and main mystery: The more I think the more my wonder grows. These things, my child, some serious change presage,

Whether for weal or woe no mortal knows, Perchance for weal,—else why we left upon the stage?

"The demon thunders of the universe Seemed all unchained, and on a helpless world Let loose to execute some devil's curse, And awful lightnings all about they hurled. Sure, child, never before a night so dire Since out of chaos God the earth did frame. With winds, with waters and with shafts of fire Spirits, strong and malign, our ruin seemed to aim.

"Our little isle I thought would blow away, So fiercely beat the thunders, winds and spray; And oft it seemed 'twas Heaven's hard decree That we be swallowed by the maddened sea.

But bolted strong to earth's foundation rocks
Was Redenfayn, and ocean's mightiest shocks,
And all the fiercest blasts of wind and rain,
With thunders mixed and lightnings dire, struck
us in vain."

An ocean wide upon a Leaf did shine,
Upon whose bosom rose a fairy isle;
Where stood a mighty man, like one divine,
And by his side a Maid, most fair and free from
guile.

CANTO 2

THE ISLAND MAID

With troubled face, sometimes a start of fright, Listened the Maid while pictured forth her Sire The awful storm that raged so through the night:—

Then to her inner chamber did retire;
And wearied by the storm, and kindred themes,
Lay on her couch to rest,—and soon was lost in
dreams.

Those who are pure in heart are ever whole. No dream of evil taints an angel's soul, Its doors are barred against all thoughts of vice; Whate'er of wrong she sees, or hears awake, Her memory no record e'er doth make: So nought of virtue does she sacrifice; And when she sleeps her soul's in Paradise, Her spirit's strength unto its height renewed, And hence deathless her beauty and beatitude.

Long and most restful was the Maid's repose,
And high the sun when she in joy arose.
"How sweet a dream! and all so slow to fade,"
She mused, as she her morning toilet made.
"Oh, if such storms are followed by such dreams,
Then go again ye heavens to extremes!
Ye winds and waves, lightnings and thunderbolts,

Tear earth and sky, and roar and howl and flash Your very uttermost! Let nature clash, And all the elements join in revolts! Let Chaos come, and tear, upset and smash! With joy I'll welcome them, and wish them nigh; For oh, at any price, such dreams I'd buy!—But then no storm nor demon that dream wrought,

In Heaven 'twas made, and by some angel brought;

Or 'twas a vision of my childhood's day, When life was bright, and every month was May, And in the city park I did with Many play." A white sea dove near to her window stood. "Sweet dove," she thought; "dost thou of love e'er dream?"

The sea dove spread her wings, bowed low and cooed,

The while her eyes did full enchantment beam.

"Methinks thy looks and motions answer yes,
And that thou dost thy dreams to me confess,"
She said, little suspecting that the dove
Upon her heart had cast the spell of perfect love.

Bewildered was her mind, she knew not why;—
But through that sea dove's gaze a mighty spell
That Angel cast the Maiden's soul to tie,
And every act or thought or will compel.
(The Youth already in his soul she'd bound
To feel and think and do as she might bid,
So now around the souls of both she'd wound
Enchantment powerful, of which they'd ne'er be
rid.)

"Why had I such a dream?" The Maiden mused, That Angel's spell through all her being fused. "So plainly shone his face, his eyes and hair, Forever painted on my heart they are, And sure, in all the world, no other half so fair. "Are dreams but fancies of the dreamer's brain? A thing of thought? an echo of one's self, That hath no substance, but is wholly vain, Engendered in the soul by some sly elf? Surely some substance in my dream must be. Never before a lover did I see, Nor thoughts of love my girlish heart contained; But now I'm on love's rack, and all my soul is pained.

"What ecstasies within my heart it wrought!
Oh, he was fair and sweet as morning skies!
What tenderness lurked in his gentle eyes!
And with his looks he tangled up my thought,
Filling my soul with bliss divinely dear.
Oh, that I had him here with no one near,
How I would press him to my loving heart;
And praying him from me never to part,
Pour all my soul down through his tender eyes,
And fully realize what is in Paradise."

CANTO 3

THE MAID'S MUSINGS ABOUT A LOVER

Then in some rhyming reveries she indulged, That things of dream and memory both divulged, And pictured forth her bright ideal man. In words like these her girl-like fancies ran:

THE MAID'S IDEAL

"Out from the sea he'll come to me:
He's tall and straight like man of state,
His manly face is full of grace,
Blue are his eyes like morning skies,
High is his brow like war-ship's prow,
Sweet is his smile and free from guile,
Smooth is his hand, his manners bland,
So sweet his voice all ears rejoice,
His lineage good from royal blood,
A Christian knight his soul is white;
Like 'Many' he and 'Pearl' I'll be:
Out from the sea he'll come to me,
And at my side will e'er abide."

Then fell a sudden shadow on her face,
As though cast by some viewless magic lace;
For all at once her mind did realize
How far the fact from dreamland often lies;
And thus she murmured forth her secret plaints:
"Oh, mother dear, and all ye gentle saints,
Tell me all things that love the heart acquaints.
With all my very life I love that man,
And love another never will nor can;
For in his face my soul is all wrapped up,
It holds my loving heart, as in a golden cup.

"If he should fail to come of love I'll die, But die all happy in my misery; Happy that I his face and smile did see: For better 'tis to grieve for love's lost flame Than pine in grief away, because no lover came.

"But happy I'll be yet! That dream too sweet, Too like reality to be a cheat. Deep in my soul I feel a certainty That he some day will come by fate's decree, His lips to mine press with an ardent kiss And take me in his arms, and make me wholly his.

"Oh, what a new world opens up to me! New thoughts, new hopes, new faith, new ecstasy; A larger body and a larger mind, The old world of my childhood is behind. A woman am I now; a broader stage Henceforth I stand upon; a brighter page In a new book of larger life unfolds. I'll meet him soon: hither his way he holds; Too brave, too noble, and too true he seems, Ever to play me false,—not even in my dreams.

"But oh, that storm last night! Mountains of

From heaven seemed upon the earth to fall, With awful crash and roar and thunder-shock, Enough a demon's spirit to appall.

And all the mighty winds that ever blew
Seemed full resolved all nature to subdue,
And wreck the universe, alas for crew
Who on so dire a night at sea were caught!
Surely, never have mortals made a boat,
That in such dreadful storm, could for a moment float.

"But in this world of struggle and of strife What unto some is death to others life; And never yet a wind so ill there be But good to some one blows,—perchance to me! The morning sun is shining brilliantly, And forth I'll venture on the shore to tread." That Angel was at work; the Myrtle Leaves so read.

CANTO 4

THE MAID'S STROLL ALONG THE STRAND

Bright shone the sun on rocky Redenfayn.
The clouds like ghosts of night had fled away;
The winds their angry passions did restrain,
And now were gentle as the breath of May;
The thunders slept within their secret caves,
And sinking down to rest were ocean's weary
waves.

Along the wreck-strewn strand the Maiden strolled:

A picture fit for angels to behold. So fair she'd scarce been deemed a maid of earth, But one who in some brighter world had birth; Her cheeks all freshly cast in beauty's mold, With tints of rose and lily fused in bloom, Her face the air about, all brightly did illume.

Her brow serene the beauteous throne might be Of intellect and peace and purity,—
Angelic three, reigning in harmony.
Her lips so red the color seemed scarce dry.
But oh, her eyes! Like baby cherubim
To guard the shining gates upon the rim
Of her soul's Paradise, whose blissful gleams
Cast spells of sorcery, as in bewitching dreams.

For her a king his kingdom would have bid.

Her gauzy dress her bosom's charms scarce hid;

Half bare her arms, of alabastrian mold;

About her neck hung low a chain of gold,

In part concealed 'neath locks of curling hair

In worship of her face low kneeling there,—

Like nuns in holy trance when they a saint behold.

Thus clad, thus walked, thus looked, this Maiden fair.

No brain-born nymph, no peri beautiful,

No poet's dream of loveliness in air,

No young priest's fancied saint adorable,

No painter's portrait of a May-queen's face,

No lover's vision of ideal bride,

No sculptor's model of angelic grace,

No Turk's conception of a harem's pride,

More charms of form and feature e'er displayed Than did so well adorn this beauteous island

Maid.

Good cause the Maid for such her happy plight, For she had dreamed the dream that gives delight To maidens' hearts like that of Paradise,—
Of lover come across the sea so wide,
(Willing for her to make great sacrifice),
In fragile boat to claim her for his bride,
Upon his knees making to her love's vow;
A lover young and tall, and brave and strong,
With tender eyes, sweet smile, and placid brow.
Her hands he held, her fingers he did kiss,
The while his eyes into her soul gazed long,
And thrilled her through and through, with
ecstasy of bliss.

Of some great joy she strong presentment had, And with bright fancies was her spirit fired. Many imaginings of things most glad, And scenes of tender love, her dream inspired. A new leaf in her book of life seemed turned, (A leaf most bright with tender sympathies), By some strange fate, and much her spirit yearned

For revelation of its mysteries, And sure she was all full of bliss they'd be, when learned.

Thinking of fancies novel but most fair, She heeded not her steps, and had no aim But lived in dreams, and walked as though on air. And thus she mused, her heart with love aflame: "Fair unto man no doubt did Venus beam When from the sea in loveliness she came: But far more fair my lover will I deem, When from the sea he comes, bright voyager, His soul on fire with love for me sincere, Takes both my hands in his all tenderly, Vows without me a day he cannot bide, And with a look of real idolatry, Kneels at my feet, and begs me be his bride. Oh, could I see him now rise from the foam That bright-faced darling boy, I played with when at home!"

That Angel did the Maid intoxicate
With love for him destined to be her mate;
And now was near to strike her clock of fate:
So did the hopeful Scribe the Myrtle Leaves
translate.

CANTO 5

THE SHIPWRECKED YOUTH

Around the Maid seemed mystery intense;
A mighty factor in her fate was rife,
Ready to blossom forth in evidence,
And be an epoch in her island life.
Somehow, somewhere near by her lover seemed.
Out from the sea he came: so had she dreamed.
Therefore, upon the sea she kept her eyes,
And thus poured forth her soul, without fear, or
disguise:

THE MAID'S INVOCATION

"Away, away the storm-cloud is going,
Then come from the sea, love, I'm waiting for
thee;

To-day, to-day, the soft zephyr's blowing, Then come, come to me, love, I'm waiting for thee. "Away, away to some bright land yonder, To-day, to-day, in thy boat we'll wander. Away, away, all doubts shall be driven, To-day, to-day, thy smile shall be Heaven.

"Away, away, from thee I'll go never, To-day, to-day, thine own bride forever. Away, away, the dire night has fleeted. To-day, to-day, my love-dream's completed. Then come from the sea, love, I'm waiting for thee.

Then come, come to me, love, I'm waiting for thee."

Happy at Baldurbane's avenging stroke, A raven, close at hand, did gayly croak; The dove lit near; the Maiden turned to look,-And lo! a battered boat upon the rock. She knew not why such thrill her spirit shook. Quick beat her heart,—her breath her throat forsook:

"The very boat!" she gasped; "my dream was truth."

Closer she looked around, and,—lo! there lay the Youth!

Fate then and there a miracle had wrought. "Behold my dream's reality!" she thought. Yet could a dream be real? Perplexed was she. But there the Youth she'd summoned from the sea.

His eyes he oped: just then the sea dove cooed. The Maid he saw. "My spirit-love!" he mused,—And she an instant felt beatitude.

That Angel was at work, and had transfused
Their spirit-loves: so read the Leaves the Scribe
perused.

His eyes reclosed; his body lay as dead.
Pale was his cheek, and sunk his pallid lids;
Like death's his marble brow; upon his head
His matted hair was filled with sand like beads,
And o'er his limbs were heaps of ocean weeds,
Beneath his half-shut eyes were purple bands,
And dark the slender nails upon his sallow hands.

In doubt the Maiden stood: his face she viewed; Within her throat her heart did palpitate; Scarce could she breathe; to earth her feet seemed glued.

What meant the scene? Was it a fact of fate, Or waking dream? Conflicting thoughts most crude

And differing sentiments confused her sense, So startled she by such a weird experience.

His eyelids twitched, a faint sigh he did heave, And nervously his fingers moved apart. In fright she willed to flee; but could not leave: Her feet refused to move. Her tender heart Now pity touched,—and to her eyes came tears. Upon his arm her hand she placed—with fears And bade him wake: scarce audible her tone,-(So near her tumult had her strength o'erthrown).

As though instinct with destiny profound, The instant in his ear her voice did sound, A nervous tremor shook him through and through,-

Akin to ecstasy; and then the dove did coo.

Slowly his lids rolled up, and blue eyes shone; Along his face a faint smile cast its light, As though in her he recognized his own; (For men near death oft have a deeper sight). Half-way his head he raised, when, quick, as thought,

She kneeled, and in her hands his shoulders caught,

Pillowing upon her lap his faded cheek. "Who are you, sir?" She timidly did speak, "My name is Legion: I'm the type of hosts, Sailing the seas and wandering 'long their coasts, Searching for her, my love, and destined bride;—
And all the world my home till her I find—
Till her somewhere I find," slow he replied,
Like one of body weak, sad heart and wandering
mind.

His answer echoed like a melody
Adown her soul: she smiled and softly sighed,
While from her eyes crept tears of sympathy.
Thrilled with delight she was, yet terrified.
"Like hers your eyes," he said; "and tender voice,
And were I well my soul would all rejoice;
But oh, the torture that doth tear my brain!
Now let me sleep. The sunshine gives me pain;—
But leave me not; your spirit comforts mine.
You are the one for whom my soul did pine."
Deep down her heart his words and looks did steal,
And woke a pity nought, but perfect love, can
feel.

Upon the cool sea-grass his head she laid
All tenderly making a pillow soft,
And of some broken boughs made him a shade,
Helped by the branching trees growing aloft,—
While filled her eyes with tears, her heart with
grief.

That he her lover was seemed her belief,— Come from the sea by her sweet song cajoled. No youth her eyes did e'er before behold, Save in her infancy,—and when she dreamed. And was this truly he, from storm and sea redeemed?

The pictured Leaves, e'en like a moving show, Exhibited the Maiden's every act; And sweet, therein, to see her come, and go, And witness her displays of artless tact: So perfect all she did, and all she did forego.

When all these Leaves he'd fully ciphered out, The pictures, signs, and mystic metaphors, (Favoring his wish wherever was a doubt, And so construing occult characters), The Scribe imagined there was yet a chance That Yndafrene and he, though parted far, By fate not choice, might as in sweet romance, Again in love draw near, beneath some lucky star.



CHAPTER VI

THE YOUTH IS REVIVED

PROEM

The emotions of the Maid on discovering the Youth are portrayed, while that Angel is developing her plan. The Sire is shown in his abode of rock, surrounded by the evidences of martial life, and lordly state. The Maid ministers to the Youth, who revives somewhat, and talks deliriously about the Maid's resemblance to the Angel of his dream; and about his mother. The Sire muses about his daughter's future, confined on that ocean isle, and she blooming into womanhood. The picture on the Leaves encourage the Scribe's hopes of Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

THAT ANGEL DEVELOPING HER DESIGN

Him had she seen in dreams that very morn,—A radiant youth; had seen his gaze of love; And by that gaze had a new passion born, Inspired somehow, perchance, by coo of white sea dove.

Now she had called him forth from out the sea;
And he had come:—(so it did really seem)!
Her eyes had feasted on reality,
And that was fact which once was but a dream.
Beside him had she kneeled, and held his head;
Then pillowed it upon the sea grass cool,—
And just in time to save him from the dead.
Surely all this was more than wonderful!
So did she muse while homeward slow she walked,
And tossed by joy and fear, unto herself she talked.

And when in thought prevailed her joyous moods, Upon her spirit's walls was many a scene Of perfect love's supreme beatitudes,—
Like magic pictures cast upon a screen,—
Her soul with ecstasy electrified:
A winsome walk by lonely riverside,

A lofty mount with an embowered seat,
A vine-clad isle, and boat on moonlit lake,
A grassy vale with some secure retreat,—
Where he and she their noon of bliss might make,
With no duty demanding sacrifice:
Such were some pictures bright, in her new Paradise.

Then would the curtain drop on her bright joys, And darkest fears seize on her timid soul, Mix her pure gold of bliss with doubt's alloys, And pictures of despondencies unroll. Perhaps but an intenser dream, she thought; Perhaps, a member he of some base clan, Some pirate in his sins and follies caught, Perhaps, oh, awful thought,—a married man! So tripped her thoughts from bad to worse and worst,

Until with griefs and fears, her heart would almost burst.

Using the white sea dove for emissaire,
That Angel hovered ever near this pair,
Happy to see her plans and hopes redeemed.
Within their youthful hearts bright dreams she'd paint:

Unto the Maid the Youth a lover seemed,
Unto the Youth the Maid appeared a saint,
So each the other loved, when all they knew they'd
dreamed.

For deep the plot that Angel did conceive,—
That she their paths and thoughts would all inweave;

So when, as though by chance, should meet their eyes,

Their spirit-loves would then materialize, And their two souls in love forever cleave;— That Heaven and earth alike at last might see A perfect love with perfect love in unity.

CANTO 2

THE SIRE'S ABODE

Strombold, the Sire, sat musing on his chair, When, he at last the Maiden's step did hear. "I've waited long," he said; "why did you stay?" She blushed, and tried to speak; but naught could say.

"What I have feared," he thought, "has come, at last:

Youth in the future lives, age in the past;
Youth feeds on fancies, age on memories,
And few their mutual likes and sympathies.
'Oh, for the days to come, and things to be!'
Is youth's sincerest wish, and only plea.
'Oh, for the days gone by, the things that were!'
Is age's only thought, and dream, and ceaseless prayer."

His question her no little did abash
"Oh, father," said she, "time did fly so fast."

Dewlike bright tears hung trembling on each lash,
And on her soul their shadow seemed to cast.
"Forgive me, child, that storm has tired my brain.
I'll take a sleep, and soon be right again."
Then down he lay, and sighed, like one somewhat
in pain.

Up 'mong the rocks Strombold his home had made,
And proofs of his nobility displayed.

Majestic 'gainst one wall of this retreat
His armor stood, of shining steel complete
From head to foot; the good sword buckled tight;
The helmet on, with scarlet plume afield,
And visor down: one mailed hand on the shield,
The other held a loaded lance upright,
Which none but man of might would want to
wield:

The whole did seem, indeed, a living hero-knight.

An effigy it was of martial life,
And told his history at a single glance.
The dents and scars on armor, shield and lance,
Told of wars waged, and scenes of deadly strife.
Some books were on the shelves, and silver plate;
Rested a baron's mace beside the door
While chests with iron bands of ancient date
About the corners stood; and on the floor
Huge skins of savage beasts killed in the chase.

Much else around told of the lordly state In which the Sire had lived, in other place. But nowhere was there aught to indicate The land or nation whence the Sire had come,-Save that it surely seemed some great Varangian's home.

Upon that rocky isle as fitting stage Mystery did seem to have her heritage,-And closely veiled waved wide her mystic wand, While breathing potent spells fraught with pre-

That ruled both man and beast, and sea and land. There seemed about to hap some strange event,-More strange than that strange isle's strange personage,

Some mighty stroke of fate seemed imminent, And sea and sky and land, seemed weirdly all intent.

The morning breeze that so oft flitted by All merrily, and fondled with the vines, Among the tops of broken trees did sigh. And o'er the cliffs did utter plaintive whines: The birds still suffering from the wind and rain No longer happy were, but sad in eve And chirp, as though downcast from grief or pain.

A lonely insect droned a dismal note High up the rock, without a change or stop; While relics of the rain from rocks remote With sound monotonous, fell slowly drop by drop.

High overhead, but often swooping low,
A raven slowly circled o'er the isle;
As though upon the beach it saw some foe
That it would subjugate by force, or guile;
And oft it gave that weird prophetic croak
Which did the ban of Baldurbane invoke.
But from her perch, upon a rock above,
Was, also, heard the coo of white sea dove;
And somehow it did seem some contest raged
That day between the powers of love and hate,
Which weal or woe unto that isle presaged,
According as 'twas writ upon the book of fate.

CANTO 3

THE MAID MINISTERS TO THE YOUTH

Hearing the sea dove's voice in tones so sweet, The Maiden oped her eyes. Bright at her feet A beaming column stood, of whitest light, Into the firmament stretching its height, Unto the sun, its gorgeous capital. Startled she was, and gazed up at the sun Pouring a beam down through a rounded hole Made by her sire to mark the hour of noon.

"So late?" she softly said; "and he,-I must be gone."

Taking a vial from a near-by store Softly she quit her father's corridor,-He soundly sleeping with a low but wholesome snore.

E'en like a butterfly the wreck-strewn strand She flew along: bright shells upon the sand, Once her delight, her steps no longer stayed. One only thought her mind and heart did bear, And strong her limbs and swift her footsteps made.

So brightly streamed behind her silken hair, So bright her eyes and rosy cheeks did shine, A vision seemed she gliding through the air, Or like an angel seen, in dream of love divine.

Quickly she reached the spot that she did seek: Still slept the Youth beneath the shady bough, Still sunk his marble eyes, pale still his cheek, Still like a dead man's was his pallid brow, Still in his hair the ocean grass and sands, And dark yet were the nails, upon his pallid hands.

Upon her knees she sunk: with gentle art His face she cleared of floating hair,—her heart, Like wild bird beating 'gainst its cage's sides, And hopes and fears all fluttering to and fro; While changed her will as flow and ebb the tides. She knew not what to do, or what not do.

Perplexed was she by many grievous doubts;

Feared she he'd wake, then feared he never would.

Appalled was she at some far-reaching thoughts

Of what might hap, or might not hap,—in case
he should.

A greater courage did her will endow,
And with her fingers' tips she touched his brow:
Down to his sleeping soul a message went,—
True love's telegraphy God did invent,
That needs no wires save those His hand has
strung

From heart to heart of lovers who are young, That tells their thoughts more quick than can the tongue.

Opened his eyes: a rapture through her shot, To speak she tried, but what to say knew not;— Then to his ashen lips, the vial gently put.

He drained the vial dry,—while cooed the dove. The cooes he heard, and slowly looked around. The Maid was gone, but plainly on the ground Her slippered foot-prints;—and the boughs above.

"No dream is this," he mused, "born of my brain; But my sweet Angel with her deeds of love."

The tide of life was rising in each vein,
And soon the stranded Youth would be himself again.

CANTO 4

HIS STRENGTH THE YOUTH REGAINS

That eve she brought him store of wine and food: He drank and ate as one in hunger would. All lost in thought into her eyes he gazed. "Lady," he asked, "are you of flesh and blood? You look so like that Angel of my dream." "Yes,—just a girl," she said, somewhat amazed, And not quite sure, at first, whether to speak, or scream.

"That wine and bread make me more strong," he said.

"More like realities do things appear;— But still you seem my very spirit Maid;-Only, could such things be, more fair and dear; For mortal ne'er could be so fair as thou; Hast thou a mother?" "Once I had." she said. And down into her hands she sadly dropped her brow.

How quick one's heart can get beyond control! That one word, "mother," deep into her soul Had dived, and oped the bitter fount of grief, Till tears her eyes o'erflowed, and gave relief. But echoing through her soul that word went on, With many a deep-drawn sigh, and heart-felt moan,

Bursting the inner doors of memory,
Enabling her within afar to see.
There shone the past, herself a fair-haired child,
Whom a dear mother kissed, on whom a father
smiled.

Then came a time of gloom, and many a tear,
And mourning robes. Upon an ebon bier
An open coffin lay, wherein did sleep
Her mother, paler than the lily's paint,
While all around her friends did groan and weep.
"I pray forgive my question, lady fair,"
He said, imploringly. "Your grief I share:
A mother I, too, had,—a very saint,
Lovely, loving, and loveable, beyond compare.

"For her sweet sake I God and Heaven love:
And do the saints and holy church approve.
No fairer angel there, nor e'er will be;
For she perfection was in form and face,
In words and deeds of love and charity.
Your mother I do know had every grace,
Or such as you she never could have borne:
Sit on this rock; let us together mourn;
My memory of my darling mother speaks.
A bond of friendship let our sorrows be.
Grief loves of grief to hear, and sorrow seeks
The sorrowful for solace and society."

Upon the battered boat, plainly in view, The white sea dove did light, and softly coo. By effort strong the Maid at length regained Her self-possession, and composure true. "Tell me not now the grief by which you're pained";

She said; "think not of what will sorrow bring. Be calm and rest; your weakness is extreme. From storm and wreck you still are suffering. When strong you get your joys again will gleam. And sweeter, brighter then, the face of life will seem."

"Oh, gentle girl, your words my life redeem. While you stay near no harm can me befall. To my poor grieving heart you are a balm. Some day, if you will hear, I'll tell you all, And then my troubled soul may be more calm," He said, like one bowed down as sorrow's thrall. "When strong you get I'll hear it all," she said; "Not now; but sleep, and back I will be soon." "Oh, stay not long," he quick did importune. "If long you stay I surely will be dead When you return." Then down, slowly, he laid his head.

CANTO 5

THE SIRE'S MUSINGS ABOUT HIS DAUGHTER

The Sire, meantime grown strong, compunction felt

For thoughts not overkind about his child; And on the matter somewhat sadly dwelt, Recalling how his time she had beguiled. While there in banishment; then thus did speak Softly in praise of her, a tear upon his cheek:

"Oh, what a matchless child, my daughter dear! From taint of any wrong, or sin, all free; Naught wicked did she ever see or hear, No angel purer is in soul than she. Such open lovingness in all her ways, Such utter frankness in whate'er she says, Such trust and confidence in words and looks, Her heart and soul and mind like open books;—Her thoughts and feelings shining through her face,

Like corals, pearls, and gold-fish, in a crystal vase.

"But what at last will be her destiny?
What can she be upon this isle, alone?
What, should I die? Then whither would she flee?

Soon she, indeed, will be a woman grown,

And for some lover kind perhaps will long, For youth and love are yoked by nature strong. Then a drear place to her will be this isle, And she will sigh and grieve she'll scarce know

While from her face will fade that happy smile, Since nothing but a mate, will woman satisfy.

"Full soon too cramped for her will be this place, I've noticed her a-gazing o'er the sea, A thoughtful look upon her lovely face, As though she dreamed somewhat of things to be, And longed, perchance, for lover's company. The slightest thought that we some day may part Goes like a dagger deep into my heart. Oh, nevermore to her a word I'll use That will her ear offend, or tender feelings bruise.

"Her husband once I thought I did foresee: 'Twas in the city park one summer day, When with great Legion's son, in childish play, She said to him that when she grew to be A woman big his wife she would become. Although 'twas said in spirit frolicsome, Legion and I, with the consent of both, Did then and there the two, with solemn pledge betroth.

"And ere my comrade died, at his request
My hand in his all solemnly I placed,
And we that pledge renewed. But he is dead;
His son away from Shonbirg Hall has fled,
And here am I from home and friends exiled;
So helpless utterly to aid my child.
No greater blessing for her could I crave
Than marriage to the son of my old comrade
brave.

"Perchance some memory of their childhood's day, When they as 'Pearl' and 'Many' oft did play, Will float into their minds, like mosses torn From neighbor rocks, and wide asunder borne, At last brought back to dwell in unity, By secret tides that wander, 'neath the sea, Thus working surely out some mystic destiny.

"And who doth know but some mysterious force May to my daughter draw my comrade's son, And through renewal of their intercourse The heart of each be by the other won? For Jux hath learned that he has left his home, And 'neath some potent spell, now far away doth roam.

"But oh, what silly speculations these For one as old as I, whose blood is cold, Whose heart romantic dreams no longer please, Whose eyes no joy may e'er again behold.

Yet somehow there wells up within my soul A feeling strong that will not be repressed, Though adverse winds may blow and billows roll, The troth Legion and I did twice attest Will some good day attain its happy goal, And thus our strains at last together run,-Legion and Strombold, then, in offspring be as one.

"Yes, seeds of hope there are within my breast, Which right now seem to sprout and grow and bloom,

(Like eggs hatched in the honey-bird's sweet nest,

So soon the fledglings learn their wings to plume). Strong faith have I these hopes will good fruit bear.

And not the bright but ash-filled apples of despair.

"For surely God hath not so geared the world That wrong shall always have the mastery, While right is from its own in sorrow hurled, And truth and justice forced from home to flee, Condemned to exile sad, by tyranny's decree.

"No; God is right and might, and right and might,

Though thwarted here and delayed there awhile, Will in the end triumph in every fight, And overthrow the stratagems of guile.

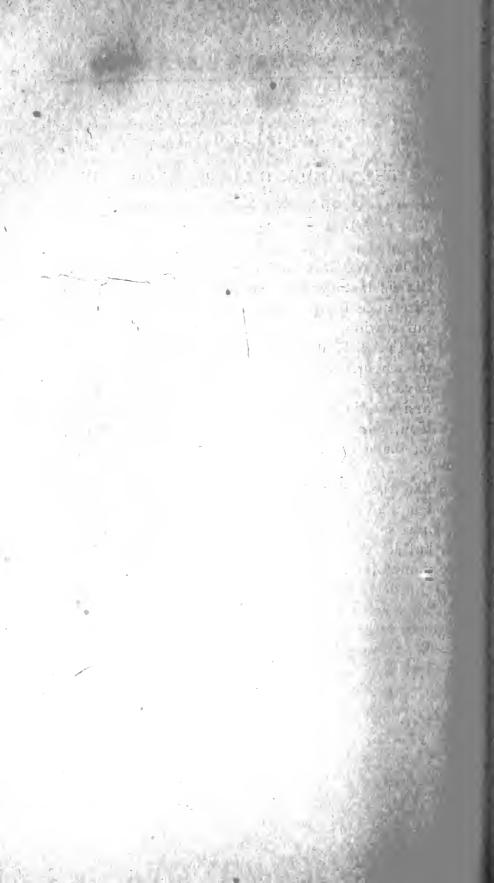
Unrighteousness may for a day prevail,
And honesty be forced at times to yield;
But first or last our God will change the scale
And righteousness make master of the field.
Such is my faith, and in this faith I'll bide,
Trusting in God and right, whatever may betide."

CHAPTER VII

THE MAID AND YOUTH EXCHANGE HISTORIES

PROEM

The Youth, fully recovered, inquired into the Maid's history; whereupon she tells him that her Sire once lived in a great city, in lordly style; but having offended the King, has been exiled to that island, with only a serf for cook and messenger. She tells with great delight of a royal reception she attended with her mother, and of the merry pranks of the jester. The Youth then gives his history, dwelling largely on the greatness of his father: he tells, also, of his aspirations to do great deeds and win fame, like the knights of old. The Maid was twice tempted to ask questions which would probably have revealed that he was Many, her betrothed; but let the matter pass. The Leaves kindle the flame of ambition in the Scribe's heart.



CANTO 1

THE MAID GIVES HER HISTORY

Before ten times had swelled and ebbed the tide,
The Youth was well, by fate indemnified.
Upon some rocks, near to the placid sea,
He and the Maid were seated, side by side,—
Delighted with each other's company.
"Your name and home?" he asked. The Maid
replied:

"My name is Margaret, but 'Margie' me
My mother called, and father calls me 'child.'
Here for some years has father lived exiled,
And here's our only home, and sole domain,—
This heap of mighty rocks,—this island, Redenfayn."

"No house I see, nor field of growing grain,
Nor sign of life," he said, with some disdain.
"Father and I live here alone"; she smiled,
And said. "Upon this isle?" he asked. "Explain."

"No other home," she answered. "When a child, Long years before he wandered to this isle, Somewhere we lived in the great far-away,—Where we did dwell in almost royal style, And over houses, lands, and many serfs, had sway.

"My father is devoted to his aims,
His country and his King he seldom names,
And when I questions ask he answers nay;
So of these matters little can I say.
But in that city great where once were we,
Where mother died,—how bright it was, and
grand!

A Paradise it seemed,—its angel she;
My father rich and great, lord of the land;—
And we so happy were. But thoughts of fame
His heart beset; so to the wars went he,
And by brave deeds a hero he became,
Till, through the mighty world, resounded far
his name.

"But he displeased his King—and here we are, With but one serf for cook, and messenger. His time my father spends 'mid smokes and mists, Seeking the secrets of the earth to learn, As do those magi called the alchemists; How metals base he unto gold may turn; How antidotes discover for all banes; How some elixir some day he may find, That drank like wine, or poured into the veins, Will make immortal all of human kind; And so, with naught but books and thoughts for friends,

His days, and oft his nights, contentedly he

spends.

"Much has my father taught me of the world, The histories of nations and their kings; How oft the mighty have been downward hurled; And what misfortune false ambition brings; So that the world afar I almost dread, The strong and wicked there, so on the good do tread."

CANTO 2

THE MAID TELLS OF A ROYAL RECEPTION

After a while in contemplation spent The Maiden thus resumed her narrative: "So happy I while mother dear did live! She took me with her wheresoe'er she went,-To Court once when the Queen invited us; And oh, how grand the royal palace was! Within, without, wholly magnificent. All without end the splendid sights we saw; Some were so great and grand, that I was filled with awe.

"Men clad in velvet cloaks with golden braid, Their swords in glittering scabbards thrust, and hilts

Of ivory, with sparkling stones inlaid.

So tall and straight were some they seemed on stilts.

Belts round their waists, a spur upon each heel, Helmets of blazing brass, or shining steel,

With horses' tails and ostrich plumes for crests; While medals, chains and stars adorned their breasts;

And some with scarfs of silk, all bright and broad;

How proud they seemed, how glorious they looked, As by they strode, each like a demi-god,—
Who even to the King, his knees would not have crooked.

"The King's jester to me most plain appears. Charmed was I with his nimble-witted spells, His painted face, and grotesque cap with ears; A bright wand in his hand with tinkling bells, His grimaces, contortions, winks and leers, His riddles, satires, jests and doggerels, To laugh and giggle, would have made a nun. Oh, he was jolly, and so great his fun I laughed until my face was almost rent. Convulsed I was at all his foolishness. E'en now the memory of the merriment His twists and turns, and funny face and dress, Awaken thrills of glee, I cannot all suppress."

Her handkerchief upon her mouth she put,—
Against her struggling laugh to keep it shut,
And blushed while striving to repress her mirth.
"Oh, but the ladies I must not forget
All plainly in my mind I see them yet.
Like goddesses they shone, not things of earth,—
So perfectly magnificent they were;

Their faces portraits seemed in gold frames set; Their eyes so brilliant, and their skin so fair; Their cheeks so rosy, and so red their lips, So white their slender hands, so pink their fingertips.

"The King and Queen-oh, how sublime they shone.

When up they rose from their resplendent throne, With glittering crowns on their majestic heads, Their garments bright with gems and golden braids.

Then all the lords and knights waved high their swords,

And shouted death to all kings, 'gainst their own. Oh, it was thrilling,—far too grand for words. In robe of broidered satin was the Queen,

And round her neck were strings of beauteous pearls.

That seemed made of some planet's crystal sheen; While brilliant diamonds shone, among her lovely curls.

"The King looked grand,—a little bronzed by wars.

Upon his mighty breast were many stars, Medals, crosses and badges bright,— a score. Around his waist a sash with golden bars, Whose tasseled ends reached almost to the floor; And by his stalwart side, a glittering sword he wore.

"Such great magnificence did captivate
My little girlish mind. The hall of state
So vast, the roof so high, so wide the walls,—
With paintings showing bright a hundred views;
Such gorgeous draperies, such splendid plate;
Columns of marble with carved capitals;
Carpets of velvet flowered in brightest hues,
(As though from nature's self they'd caught the scene),

Covered the floor where stood the King and Queen, While sweetest music every heart did cheer.

Really I felt as though in Heaven I were,
And naught the scenes can from my mind efface.

The Queen,—she stroked my hair, and kissed my cheek;

The King,—upon my head his hand did place, So fatherly; and both to me kind words did speak.

"Oh, of that night how often have I dreamed,
It so like Heaven to my young heart seemed.
I wish its like I once again might see!
But worried o'er my father's jeopardy,—
Although ended the war, and danger past,
Mother broke down,—her strength at last all spent.

An urgent message was to father sent,
That she was sick in bed, and life was failing
fast.

"Prompted by love, and fearing all delay, Father came home without the King's permit. But vain was love; mother wasted away,-And died. The King misled, in a great fit Of wrath, believing father wrong had done, Stripped him of title, honor and estate. And sent him exiled here to live alone,-Till otherwise, some day, decrees some friendly fate.

"Such is the story of my little life, And of the hardships we have undergone; But God will see that justice vet is done; And in my soul supremest faith is rife Some day from here we'll go with all our hoard, To our old home, my father's wrongs redressed, His lands and serfs and titles all restored, Welcomed and honored by the King as guest, At Court again appear,—a mighty lord,— And I as happy as a saint that's blest." Here loud she laughed her pleasure to attest;-Then said: "And that queer jester there, with all the rest."

No fairer portraits eyes did ever see Than on a Leaf, in miniature did gleam, Of Margie telling her sweet history, While Legion listened as though in a dream: Like sight in angel-land the scene did seem.

And softly sighed the Scribe, while he did pray That thus fair Yndafrene might talk to him some day.

CANTO 3

THE YOUTH GIVES HIS HISTORY

Expressing fear that of him she might tire, Adding some flattering words and compliments, And joining in her hope that her brave Sire Would soon have friends to set forth his defense Unto the King, and show his innocence, And thus to good will change the royal ire, And pardon full and reinstatement get, This story of his life the Youth gave Margaret:

"Legion of Shonbirg Hall my father was— Legion's a family name, given because In time of war our great progenitor Alone a legion was, so great his skill and power.

"My father wished to prove a worthy son. His aspiration was to win renown
That with the best and bravest would compare;
And on his breast medals and stars to wear,
Crosses, and other decorations bright,
That would his mighty deeds of valor crown,
And make him famous in his country's sight,
As proofs that he had many victories won.

Ambition's fires burned in my father's brain, And flamed, as on an altar, in his heart; And naught cared he for danger, death or pain, If in the battle he could have a foremost part.

"But while to fame my father did aspire,
And of distinction was most covetous,
There were some other things he valued higher,
In doing which he was most scrupulous.
For justice and for right he ever stood;
Respect for law, and loyalty to King;
A reverence profound for womanhood;
No act to do or think, that would just censure bring;

"To hold his honor all things else above,
And spurn even the very thought of vice;
No act to do good men would not approve;
Death to prefer to show of cowardice;
His self-respect ever to guard and love,
The good will of the good to make secure,
And keep his heart and tongue and person pure;
Better honor with pain than ease debased,
To die a hero's death, than live a life disgraced.

"When o'er the land the trumps of war were blown,

When in the air the battle-flags were flown, When everywhere the herald and the skald Made known that war was on, and all men called To rally to the cause of father-land,
All Legion-like my sire was first on hand,—
Fully equipped. I seem to see him now,
Upon his steed, amid his martial band,
His helmet shining on his lofty brow
With streaming horse-hair plume dyed red as blood,

That like a fiery meteor fiercely glowed,—
Filling his friends with faith, his foes with fright;
His coat of mail fitting his rounded form
As though of nature's growth; his breastplate bright,

Inlaid with burnished brass, blazed like a sun; A great sword at his side; upon one arm A shining shield of many metals spun; And in his steel-clad hand an ax he bore: A mighty king he looked, caparisoned for war.

"The fiery jet-black steed my father strode
Well fitted was for rider of renown;
And proud he seemed of such a noble load,
In showy armor clad, as in a gown,
And with bright trappings gayly overspread.
His big round eyes shot fire, and oft his head
He fiercely bowed, and champed upon his bit,
Pawed at the ground, and neighed, and curvetted,
As though to man's control, no longer he'd submit.

"And all around were men in warrior guise, With battle-axes armed, and swords and spears, With songs and shoutings, whoops and battlecries:

Men of the towns and plains, and mountaineers, On horses some, and some did march on foot, With banners waving, and the beat of drums, The blast of trumpet, and the note of lute,-As mighty armies marched when all the world was Rome's."

The Laurel Leaves here blazed with paintings bright.

Portraits of heroes great, pictures of wars, Duels most desperate 'tween men of might, Processions grand led by proud conquerors; But he, most glorious among them all, Legion the First, founder of Shonbirg Hall: Yet on his lofty head did raven's shadow fall.

CANTO 4

THE YOUTH TELLS OF THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS

"Out from an upper window looking on, My mother and myself the host surveyed, Until the scene and sound afar had gone. While me it pleased the sight her soul did rue, And on her face did cast a gloomy shade.

His hand my father waved in last adieu,
As by he rode amid his cavalcade.
The pageant did my soul so magnetize
That never once away I turned my eyes
Until no longer was a flag in view:
Then mother, sad at heart, unto her room withdrew."

Here dropped the Youth his head with sorrowing; These woful memories did his spirit gloom; But soon his peace of mind recovering, His story of himself he did resume. "My mother,—oh, a very saint was she, And fair of face as she was good of heart, My father she did love surpassingly, And ne'er was happy when they were apart, Or on his face appeared the slightest shade. Oh, how at nights on bended knees she prayed, That God for his dear sake would every evil thwart.

"For his conversion she did ever yearn,

To deeds of peace she tried his heart to turn,—

Deeds that would help the poor, and those distressed;

Told of the lowly works that Jesus did, And how through him the world had all been blessed.

He ne'er replied, and never once forbid; And when she'd cease he'd kiss her and withdraw. He thought there was somehow a Legion-law, Written in blood by his progenitor, Requiring him to give his heart and all Unto his country when her voice did call: And so he joined the army for the war, Looking with haughty scorn on all that would debar.

"One day came news a battle had been fought; The victory ours, but many thousands slain. By valiant deeds amid the battle wrought My father did the greatest glory gain; But dire the price with which his fame was bought.

For fearless ever he took risks too great, And halted was by the strong hand of fate. Though full of wounds he was too proud to yield. A hero friend with valor desperate Beat back his many foes, and bore him from the field."

(The Maiden started, and surprised appeared,-As though to speak: the Youth saw not, nor ceased),-

"And nursed him till he died. A holy priest, That his great soul for Heaven might be crowned, Extreme unction to him administered, And buried him in consecrated ground. Commemorative of my father's fame, As hero mighty through the land renowned,

A lofty monument the King has reared Bearing in letters bright my father's name, And splendid words to show what odds he overcame.

"But nothing could my mother's grief allay;
Paler and paler turned her lovely cheeks,
And feebler grew her voice from day to day;
Until at last the days grew into weeks.
Out of her sight she would not let me stay
But oft would press me hard unto her breast.
My father's face and eyes I had, she'd say,
And thought somehow in me, his very soul did
rest.

"At last my mother died,—her heart was broke. On her death-bed a chain of gold she took That held a locket, with pearls covered thick And hung it lovingly around my neck, With many a tear, and choking sob, and sigh,—Bidding me wear it in her memory, Saying it would bind close our parted souls. My father's portrait and her own it holds, Which she had worn e'er since her wedding-day—His bridal gift." The Youth here from his breast The locket drew, and to his lips long pressed; Then opening it their portraits did display. The Maiden looked as though to make request; But soon he turned his face his grief to hide,—His tears too womanlike, to suit a Legion's pride.

Recovering soon, his story he resumed: "After my mother's death, in Shonbirg Hall, Our home, which thenceforth seemed to sorrow doomed.

All hedged around by moat and vine-clad wall, An orphan boy, I lived like one entombed,-No company but tutor grim, and thrall; And little seeing that gave me delight, Except what told of my progenitors. My father's fame and mighty deeds in wars, My only thoughts by day and dreams by night; And every page that of his valor told With joy I read. When from my tutor's sight, As in the thoroughfares or parks I strolled, Some soldier would to me of father talk, Praising his prowess, master-strokes and might. Close by his side a long way would I walk, His words to hear, to me worth more than gold; And ever afterward, did him in honor hold."

CANTO 5

THE YOUTH SPEAKS OF HIS ASPIRATIONS

Wiping away a tear that glazed his eye,-(The while he thought he heard the Maiden sigh), He moved his seat somewhat, and further said: "Being the son of hero so renowned, And smitten by the charms of chivalry, The thrilling pages of romance I read;-

Of Arthur and his Knights of Table Round, Sir Lancelot the brave, Sir Gallahad The pure of heart, and Caradoc the good, Famed for his wife, and all that brotherhood Of chivalry so pure, that for high honor stood.

"Stories I read of mighty Charlemagne,
And his array of paladins so brave,—
Roland the bold and strong, Ogier the Dane,
And great Rinaldo who but fame did crave.
And ever since I've longed to be a knight
Like Gallahad, with sword like Roland's keen,
A shield like Rogero's that dazzled sight,
Helmet and mail and horse the best e'er seen,
And thus equipped like Legion's worthy heir,
But quailing not from fear of Legion's fate,
Charge like a thunder storm 'gainst all who dare,
Some glorious cause grandly to vindicate,
Or from the Moslem's grasp rescue some lady
fair."

The Maid, whose eyes were fixed upon his face,
As loving magnet on the Polar star,
And who while he did talk changed not her place,
And often did her breathing almost bar,
(Such was the spell he and his words had
wrought,

And such the force of some strong conjury),
A sigh here heaved, and tear-drops formed apace
Around her drooping lids, the while she thought,

Perchance, somehow, it may be, soon or late, The Youth her Sire might "grandly vindicate," And she would be that "Lady fair" he sought. The white sea dove here softly cooed o'erhead, And wild a raven flew, as though in awful dread.

His lofty aspirations next he told, His dreams of glory brightly pictured forth; And then in lower tones and voice less bold Described his spirit-love, and all her worth; Told how a spell upon him seemed to rest, Compelling him to search through all the earth, O'er land and sea, for her, nor cease the quest Till she was found; how having searched the land In vain, by force he could not understand, Led by a dove, that flew from tree to tree, He found himself at last, afloat upon the sea.

Then pictured he his soul's felicity, His love's descent upon a starry beam, Their ecstasies of bliss. "Enchanting dream!" Exclaimed the Maid, in fullest sympathy. "Oh, call it not a dream!" quickly said he, "But Heaven-life: a dream to flesh and blood. But to the soul divine reality. This life on earth forbids ideal good, And few there be such life can understand— Ideal love in love's ideal land. Where all is love, and life is love indeed, No time, no change, no pain, no flesh to feed;

But ever blooming youth, and melodies Divine; no cravings, no satieties, But one sweet ecstasy of never ending bliss."

Again she sighed, and peeped forth timid tears. "But oh, that awful storm!" continued he. "As though in chaos dropped both land and sea, And all the elements were mutineers. I cried,—the thunders swallowed every word; For help I shrieked,—but made no sound I heard; Around I looked,—naught but a Maelstrom's well, And monsters huge as earth, and horrible as hell.

"The storm was all in all, and I was naught, In nightmare agonies my soul was clasped; Swamped was my boat, and death my body sought.

My half-dead frame some ocean-giant grasped, And flung me on the shore, with grass and sand, As if I were but naught within his mighty hand.

"Hardly alive there on the beach I lay:
Long howled the angry ocean for its prey,
And oft reached forth what seemed a monstrous
paw,

To drag my helpless body down its maw.

But when some awful wave would drag me hence,

Held back I was by some strange influence;

And in my soul did sound some mystic voice,

That though near death I was, somehow made me rejoice."

When read the Scribe what on the Leaves was writ,

And saw portrayed the pictures exquisite
Of valiant knights and brilliant deeds of fame,
Then in his soul burst forth ambition's flame;
While came a flood of aspirations grand
A name to make, bright as the sun, broad as the land.

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CHAPTER VIII

COMPANIONSHIP DEVELOPS INTO LOVE

PROEM

The Maid and Youth, in constant and close companionship, became infatuated with each other. But Legion, not knowing the Maid was his betrothed, deemed it below him to marry an exile's daughter, as well as a violation of his betrothal vow, and his father's promise. So he restrained himself and concealed his love. the other hand the Maid was open and demonstrative in her affection.—Here a Chasm appeared in the story, and a warning that the balance told of woe, and so had been thrown over the walls of Paradise, being unfit for angels to read; and was then hanging on Hell's gate. Shocked by the Chasm, the Scribe vowed to give up ambition, if Yndafrene answered an enigma he had sent her.

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CANTO 1

THE MAID AND YOUTH IN CLOSE COMPANION-SHIP

STRUCK by the faces in the locket's close,
And by the deed of him who'd saved from foes
The Youth's brave father on the battle-field,
Questions the Maid was prompted to propose
That strange but happy facts would have revealed;

But so his history did her soul entrance, Alas, she nothing said, and so passed by the chance.

Had she those questions asked, oh, what a flood Of tears she might have saved that she did weep! And he have saved what streams of human blood! Alas, how small a cog, left out, will make Our clock of destiny such false time keep! Whereby so many hearts are made to ache. How oft are opportunities unknown Until they've passed us by, and are forever gone!

The Maid and Youth by fate together thrown, Fond of each other's company had grown. Open and artless she in act and talk, He touched at heart but more reserved in speech. Each vine-clad bower she showed, and sea-side walk,

And many curios picked up from the beach,
Where she her childhood's days had whiled away,
And early maidenhood; rubbles of chalk,
Sea-shells and pebbles bright, with which she once
did play.

While thus to him she showed her little hoards,
All greedily he feasted on her words,
Her tones, her happy looks, and artless ways;
His eyes and ears, and heart, and soul and mind,
Wrapped up in her, and in her sweet displays,
As though some potent spell his thoughts did
bind.

Thus silken threads of love, that Angel there did wind.

What sort of robe did her fair form enfold,
Whether of homespun, or of silk her guise,
Whether she slippers wore, or goat-skin ties,
Whether she necklace had, or chain of gold,
Bracelets, breastpin or rings, he noticed not,—
Or slightly noticing straightway forgot;
For so her garb with her did harmonize
They all that dear thing made which held his
eyes,—

Of which her face, that blossom without flaw, Did him so fascinate naught else he thought or saw.

So perfect seemed the Maid, so full of grace, So sweet of speech, so very fair her face, So sincere, gentle, full of tender ways, The Youth scarce deemed her of the world a part. Nature's own child was she in artlessness, As open as the daisy's was her heart, Whate'er she thought he could but acquiesce; Her words as truthful as the sea-dove's coo, No morn in May so sincere as her smile, As pure her thoughts as drops of lily dew, Free as a saint from any thought of guile. And from her soul her sentiments did mount As waters bright and sweet, from forth a crystal fount.

Her words seemed born of wit to music wed, And her bewitching face their spell enhanced; Naught could he do but list to what she said: No Siren's song a seaman so entranced. And when she laughed her laugh in sooth did seem Some thrilling opera heard in a dream, Whose echoes conjure up within the soul A gleeful ecstasy, a jubilee Of sunshine, merriment and melody, Spreading afar and wide, with rhythmic roll,-The which once heard doth hold the heart in spell, And memory hugs in joy, with thrills ineffable.

No playmate, girl nor boy, nor gentle beast, The Maiden had, and often did she sigh

That none there was to share with her each feast, To listen to her words and make reply. (Men have been hermits and the life have loved, But from companionship, never has woman roved.)

To woman loneliness is agony.
All things that live have something for their goal:
The snow-white swan by nature seeks the sea,
The magnet turns by impulse to the pole,
Perpetually the planets near the sun,
And to the ocean rivers ever run,
By instinct flies the pigeon to its home,
Towards the moon forever flows the tide,
So woman's soul in search of love doth roam;
And though she have all other things beside,
Without true love returned, she's never satisfied.

CANTO 2

THE CHARM OF LOVE

Little that Angel's work, in act or word;
The Youth and Maid each in the other saw
All realized the ideal each adored,
In mind, and face and form without a flaw;
And so in unison their sympathies
His heart her own did seem, and hers seemed ever his.

Changed was the Youth, obedient to love's laws:

His former self he now no longer was, Transfigured by that Angel, and the Maid. No longer loved he secret strolls in shade; No longer he a man of moody miens, No longer gazed he at the stars, and sighed; No longer fancy painted Eden-scenes; No longer came in dreams his spirit-bride; No longer did the earth his soul forsake; No longer did his brain his throne and kingdom make.

The island Maid to him was all in all,-He wrapped in her as kernel in a ball; Her eyes did hold his heart as with a chain; Her face the star to which his thoughts e'er turned:

Her image the sole picture in his brain. Her presence the sole thing for which he yearned; Her smile within his heart woke ecstasies. Her voice the only sound that did enchain, Herself the sum and substance of all bliss, And elsewhere naught of beauty, love or truth. Such was the Maiden to this raptured Youth! She his soul's idol, he idolater; All virtues angels have, combined he thought in

her.

With words of love and beauty all perfumed Here into rhyming lines, the Myrtle Leaves thus bloomed:

THE MYSTIC PAIR

Naught in itself is quite complete However fair and good, But somewhere something is that's meet To make it all it should.

No independent thing respires
In earth, or sea, or sky:
Each thing some other thing requires
To work its destiny.

All that has life is made in pairs,
No unpaired thing is bred,
Save nondescripts that leave no heirs,
And those whose mates are dead.

'Tis land and sea, 'tis earth and sky,
'Tis mountain and its vale,
'Tis sound and ear, 'tis light and eye,
'Tis female and her male.

For every flower there is a bee,
For every soul a truth,
For every he there is a she,
For every maid a youth.

All pairs are tied by mystic threads Our mother nature makes, But love's the silken cord that weds True hearts, and never breaks.

When this the Scribe had read, and pictures seen,

That shone upon the *Leaves* as on a screen, Within his heart new hopes began to sprout That some day yet he'd win fair Yndafrene, And from his book of fate all griefs be blotted out.

CANTO 3

THE YOUTH CONCEALS HIS LOVE

The rose-bud's born its beauties to unfold When warm the sunshine pierces to its core; So youthful hearts when lovers come all bold Sweet welcome give and open wide each door, Nor do their favors sell for gems, or gold. When maidens love their actions oft betray; And so to Eros often fall a prey.

Fair Margie's every act of love was born, Love deep and pure and sweet as honey dew Within the lily's heart at early morn,— And plain as rose in June unto a lover's view.

But in his words the Youth showed great restraint,

And nought he said at all his love displayed;
For careful he his lineage not to taint,
Nor that high honor for his rule he'd made,
However much his feelings might be strained.
And exile's child was she, in schools untrained;
And might not shine in fashion's captious eye.
A Legion he, almost of royal blood,
And in his bosom aspirations high.
With her his bride forfeit he surely would
His King's regard, and stand at Court disgraced,—

Rather than which death's self, a Legion would have faced.

Besides, to Pearl, the daughter of the Dane He'd been betrothed; and on his soul and brain Were spells that unto hers his heart did bind, And forced him ever on, her home to find. For she in early youth had won his love; And though away she'd gone through some strange fate,

Somehow to her his thoughts would ever rove. And she did seem for him somewhere to wait.

Margie to him did strangely oft recall Pearl's eyes and hair and voice, and manner sweet.

Which tended all the more his heart to thrall, And make fair Margie's sway more speedy and complete.

'Twas night: asleep were all the restless winds; Far, far away did seem men's haunts and sins; The moon sat happy on her star-gemmed throne; And in her smiles the great wide world rejoiced. Upon the sea a pensive calmness shone, And nought in nature strong emotions voiced. The silent trees seemed nodding, half asleep; The sea-birds nested by their dreaming mates; The fish were in their caves down in the deep; E'en restless sea-lions ceased their loud debates, And silence everywhere, on noiseless feet did creep.

High on a cliff the Youth and Maiden sat,-In all humility he at her feet. Nowhere save where they sat was sight of land. Below the ocean lay, so still and grand,-So beautiful, so vast, the earth astride. Their little isle seemed floating in the air; And like a dream of time's eternal tide, Unending stretched the sea, unto the sky afar.

Full high the cliff did tower above the flood.

A time and place it was for love's young bud
To start and grow, and blossom, and bear fruit:
Of naught propitious were they destitute.
There were the moon and stars, a lonely isle,
A seat beside the sea, two youthful hearts,—
(Things that love's humors oftenest beguile;)
They, too, in all things perfect counterparts;—
And no intruders near, them to deride:
(Young love is most at home, where only two abide.)

Turning neither to right nor left the eye
Each looked upon the scene all silently,
As though all other things were quite forgot;
Yet little did they see, for sight is not
Of eyes alone, but eyes and mind allied,
And neither's mind did with their eyes abide;
Their thoughts were in each other so enwrapped,
That neither mused on what elsewhere had
happed;

And so each did the other fascinate

That their fond hearts, like doves, in perfect love
did mate.

Love when intense a mystic power exhales
That all pervades a loving soul when near,
And generates a placid pleasure there,
Which a true loving heart with bliss regales,—
Without soft words low whispered in the ear,

Or gentle pressure by the hand or arm, Or loving lips on lips all moist and warm. These acts for man, the animal, has charm, But of true spirit-love, no parcel form. When still the tongue of love, thought talks to thought

Down in the secret chambers of the soul: And sight, and touch, and speech are all as naught:

A perfect rapture doth all sense control,— Such is the miracle by holy true love wrought.

Long looked they on the sea through air so clear, Nor at each other gazed, nor did they speak, Nor touched he arm of hers, or hand, or cheek; Each happy that the other was so near: Such is the force of love's own effluence When pure the mind and heart, and love sincere. 'Tis true awhile he held in reverence A dangling end of her loose scarf that blew Upon his arm, but felt remorse, and soon withdrew.

Just then a raven on a scragged limb Uttered a croak, to happy thought a knell. And down the sky a blood-red meteor fell, Bursting afar upon the ocean's rim; Up through the air came a sea-lion's yell, And nature's face assumed an aspect grim. Thereat they both arose as though in fright, And where their paths did part they, somewhat prim,

Shook hands, and faintly said, "Good-night, good-night,"

While overhead did moan, sadly, a sea dove white.

CANTO 4

THE SIRE'S ENEMIES AT WORK

The enemies of Strombold not content
While he did live, and fearing punishment
For their vile slanders and most wicked acts,
In case the King should fully know the facts,
Three men had hired the brave Strombold to slay.

These men in small row-boat, (lest sails betray), Had crossed the sea upon that very day; And even then were hid below the cliff On which the Maid and Youth did sit, their skiff Moored to the mighty rock, which loomed like Teneriffe.

"Two people see I on you lofty rock,"
Said one, greatly surprised, and much alarmed;
For sudden danger e'en brave men will shock,
When for a wicked purpose they are armed.
"We've been betrayed: Strombold has watchers out.

If this be so great trouble is ahead;

For he is strong and brave, and in a bout

A score of common men he'd have no cause to
dread."

So pondered they with apprehensions dire,
For great the fame of Strombold with the sword;
And men who would assassinate for hire
Value their lives far 'bove the richest hoard.
A thousand suppositions filled each soul,
A dozen men they feared might be on guard.
Just then from off the cliff a rock did roll,
Whereat that raven croaked, his hearing jarred;
Adown the sky that blood-red meteor fell,
And through the air came that sea-lion's yell,
Which had the Maid's and Youth's communion
sweet so marred:

These sights and sounds, so wondrous strange and weird,

To these assassins vile were filled with fears;
Unto their minds a hundred frights appeared
Such as do scare the souls of murderers.
In panic dire they turned their boat away,
And rowed back o'er the sea, in awful dread;
And ere fully appeared the light of day,
They were concealed on land, scarcely more live
than dead.

Forthwith these hirelings vile report did make That Strombold and his daughter had been slain; And their promised reward did promptly take, All glad at their escape and bloodless gain,—
Telling that pirates base had ravaged Redenfayn.

Two pictures on the Wreath did brightest seem:
One, of the Youth and Maid upon the cliff,
Like vision bright seen in poetic dream,
While dark beneath were fiends in secret skiff;—
The other picture showed that meteor red,
Flooding with awful glare the sky and sea;
A raven circling dark far overhead,
While those vile fiends, in fright, eastward away did flee.

CANTO 5

THE MAID'S MUSINGS ABOUT THE YOUTH

Like one who'll have no bar her joy to cramp, Entering her room the Maid lit every lamp. "So happy feel I that I want things bright," She said, her eyes and cheeks with joy aglow, As though from her glad spirit's overflow. Most picturesque, indeed, and quaint the scene,—A palace-cave wrought for some fairy queen, By human skill fitted for mortal's use. Furnished it was with couches, tables, chairs.

Curtains and carpets, mirrors all profuse, With many curios and toilet wares, Besides paintings and other works of art, That fascinate the eye, and charm a lady's heart.

In such a room, amid such bright display, Herself enhancing much the brilliant scene, The maiden moved with face and gesture gay, As fair and happy as a May-day queen,-Humming a merry song in undertone, That told how love, at last, had found and won his own.

Towards the Youth her every thought did go, As honey-laden bees toward their hive: Great was the pleasure thus she did derive, And her young heart with bliss did overflow, "So gentle he," she thought, "such tenderness! How lovingly my scarf he did caress! Such rapture seemed upon his face to shine, When for a moment dwelt his eyes on mine: He looked a love that seemed, in truth, a love divine.

"All perfect he, from every point of view! So much like mine his tastes. Romantic, too, His history: by mighty tempests blown, And billows brought, across a savage sea, And at my very feet half dead laid down, As though by fate destined alone for me,-And therefore I,-oh, joy!-destined his bride to be.

"How blue his eyes! I always fancied blue. How bright they beam! so lovingly and true. His hands and feet so shapely and so small. Slender his fingers, pink his nails and shorn, His figure straight and brave, his stature tall: All certain signs that he was gentle born, And destined by sure fate, high station to adorn.

"Lofty and white like Baldur's is his brow,—
No sea-king's ship had more majestic prow;
His head crowned thick with hair in disarray;
His smiles so sunny, and his laugh so gay;
His mouth so comely, and so white his teeth,—
And strong and regular; so sweet his breath."
Just here she sighed at thought how sweet
must be

A kiss of love from one so fair and dear as he.

Somehow to her he seemed the gallant boy,
Now grown to manhood, who when she a child
In city park, did play with her in joy;
Had saved her from attack of dog in rage,
Which in revenge strove him then to destroy,
And bit his arm, and face and clothes defiled.
Recalled she, too, how they in play did pledge
Their troth, and vow to marry when of age;
And how in ecstasy of childish bliss,
They laughed and hugged, with many a merry
kiss.

Then wondered she if ever pranks so wild,

Could come to aught, since she from him had been exiled.

The mystic Myrtle Leaves here ended short, (As though from Venus then the skald did part); But written on some cypress leaves attached, In penmanship and ink of different sort, (That with the other writing noways matched), Were characters and pictures dolorous, Which, with misgivings great, the Scribe translated thus:

A CHASM IN THE WREATH

A chasm's reached: beyond,—oh, seek it not! Who stayeth here chooseth the happier lot. Who seeks beyond must seek the gate of Hell, Guarded by monstrous nondescript most fell. Many the troubles there to be o'ercome;-Here Paradise, there Pandemonium; Here shines the sun, but there Gehenna smokes; Here cooes the dove, but there the raven croaks; Here rules love's charm, but there the spell of hate; Here Heaven's golden door, but there Hell's iron gate.

Stay here in sunshine, there is not a spark. Ope memory's door, and dwell therein with joy, Chain fancy down; with grief the future's dark. Why venture where so much of sin's alloy?

Fate for the Maid has willed a darksome doom: What angel longs to weep? The Youth's career, Mixed with much blood and sweat,—and many a tear,

Is full of agony: who longs for grief and gloom?

Love to the gate of Paradise doth lead,
For love's both holiness and ecstasy;—
The one thing mortals most of all do need,
That soundeth in their souls the jubilee.
Ambition lures to Pandemonium,
For woe and selfishness ambition is;
And from ambition all our sorrows come.

The chasm's reached: here love, ambition there. Who seeks beyond will find the dammed Abyss, And be beyond the reach of saving prayer, The Laurel Wreath must read that thither fell, When cast by angel hands from Paradise,—And hangeth now upon the gate of Hell; And in the awful quest his soul may sacrifice.

Read not beyond this page; but close the book, And go thy way. Enough of woe thou'lt see In thine own life, so need'st not elsewhere look. Alas, alas, a pang why should there be? Why should young hearts with griefs and woes be pierced?

And why miss love, our sweetest, brightest draught,

(So seldom ours), when for it all do thirst, While hate's vile bitter juice so often must be quaffed?

Ever 'twas thus, and thus must ever be. With tears is oiled the heart's machinery; And all its cogs have blood for lubricants. Whate'er of perfect bliss our soul enchants Is in a dream, or else but Dead Sea fruit; And in our path sorrows do ever lurk. So read no more, do not thy soul pollute;-That ban of Baldurbane its woful wrath will work.

On the last Leaf did glare an awful scene,-A precipice that seemed as deep as Hell; Therein a goblin of infernal mien, Waiting for those who in the chasm fell. Shocked by this chasm, the Scribe vowed in his soul,

If Yndafrene gave loving answer back Unto enigma sent, then love should him control, Nor longer would he bide, upon ambition's track.

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PART 2

THE BOOK OF AMBITION AND GRIEF

Ambition, serpent of the soul,

First-born of Hell and sire of Sin,

Who gilt the intoxicating bowl

Of fame, and poured bright spells therein—

But selfishness thou art; thy breath

The heart corrupts; of wretchedness

Chief source; of love and joy the death;—

Thy dream most bright,—but merciless.



CHAPTER I

THE SCRIBE'S SEARCH FOR THE LAUREL WREATH

PROEM

While realizing that the Laurel Leaves, written on the planet, Mars, told of ambition and grief; and though it appeared impossible for him ever to read them, hanging as they were on the gate of Hell, nevertheless, the Scribe was possessed by an intense yearning to know their contents; and was eager to incur any risks in searching for them. While musing hereon at eve, he came by chance to a maiden's grave, and was sorrow-stricken at her epitaph. Suddenly a supernatural giant appeared, and opened the way to Hell's gate. both went; and there, amid the most appalling sights and sounds, and through the awfullest dangers, the giant reached Hell's gate, seized the Laurel Wreath, escaped the diabolical monster on guard, aided by a divine phylactery; and brought the Wreath away. The Scribe then read the contents of the Leaves, and thus satisfied his cravings.



CANTO 1

THE SCRIBE'S MUSINGS AND MEANDERINGS

In somber robes, where light began to fade,
Down-hearted Eve, with many a tear and moan,
Searched every plain and vale, forest and glade,
To find some trace of her dear sire, the Sun;
But hastening down the rosy western skies,
Ever avoided he her sorrowing eyes,
Which ceaselessly bedewed the grass and flowers
With their pure crystal tears, as do minutest
showers.

Close in the footsteps of down-hearted Eve, Within a lonely vale the Scribe did stroll, While love and fame did many a picture weave In flaming colors deep within his soul. His thoughts roamed far and wide, bidding adieu To time and space, matter and circumstance. (Prompted by sympathies all born of ruth,) At last across the ocean wide they flew,—
To island Redenfayn, the Maiden and the Youth;

For charmed he'd been by their most weird romance;

(The dove and raven 'mong the combatants;) And greatly wondered what the awful truth

Beyond that "chasm" angels feared to cross,
Where naught of good there was, and all was loss.
To look beyond his spirit's eyes strove hard,
But mystery's viewless realm enveloped all;
Nature's strong bonds he could not all discard.
Where'er he gazed all was invisible,—
One universal and impenetrable wall.

Strange words those on the cypress leaves, he thought:

"The chasm's reached: beyond—oh, seek it not! Who seeks beyond must seek the gate of Hell."

Longed he to tread beyond a mortal's lot,

Longed he to read what angels dared not tell,

Longed he to face the dangers most abhorred.

"Chain fancy down! What slave," thought he,

"can chain his lord!"

"Fancy! cunning artist thou. Drear this earth Beside thy Edens, made with skill divine From memory's chaos, music, smiles and mirth, Birds, flowery vales, sunshine, eternal youth, Unending love, and joys that ne'er decline; Nothing injurious and naught uncouth. Oh, for the days of old and fairy-land! Oh, for an earthly Paradise, right here, at hand!"

Thoughts of the Laurel Wreath in tyranny,
Drove other thoughts from the Scribe's mind away.
Like an enchanter's wand its mystery
Did all his heart control, and spirit sway.
The more about the sundered Wreath he mused,
The more he yearned its mystic words to read,—
Till of aught else to think his mind refused.
For some relief he prayed, nor would he heed
What path his feet might tread, what canyon
great

Or cavern vast, what demons he might meet,
What dangers face, so that Hell's iron gate
At last was reached, where hung that Laurel
Wreath,

By angel hands torn from its Myrtle mate, And cast o'er walls of Paradise to Hell beneath.

A lonely grave the Scribe's meanderings stayed, And brought his musings to a sudden end. The trees around in silence shed their shade, And all things seemed to sorrow for some friend. Its brow the cypress laid in tender grief Against the willow's cheek, while every leaf Dropped tears, and sighed in tender sympathy, That anything on earth should ever die. Beside the grave a rill was whimpering, A turtle dove cooed low, with drooping wing, As though to show their grief for the departed.

A rose-bud crushed the little tomb-stone bore, And these sad words: "Sixteen and brokenhearted."

Whereat the Scribe did her sad fate deplore.

And bending low his head he deeply sighed,

That here, of broken-heart, a maid so young had died.

While thus with grief and love his heart was soft, Uprose before him Yndafrene, the fair, Like angel floating in the air aloft; And her sweet smile did so entrance his soul All he forgot,—except that she was there; For she unto his loving spirit was the goal.

CANTO 2

THE SCRIBE'S DESCENT TO HELL'S GATE

The Laurel Wreath at last his thoughts reclaimed, And with such heat his yearning was inflamed, To learn what fate the Maid and Youth befell, That he resolved, in spite of death and Hell, That Wreath to find, and read its mystic words, E'en though unto his heart, they might prove very swords.

Just then his spirit felt a fearful thrill: He turned,—and lo! a giant near the rill. (Thus a fixed purpose, like Aladdin's lamp, Some power evokes to help us work our will.) Upon the ground the giant twice did stamp;
Then oped the earth, and down a canyon vast
Noiseless they sped into a cavern deep.
Doubting whether awake, or yet asleep,
The Scribe around his startled eyes did cast,
When horrors he beheld, that horrors all surpassed.

From lofty heights great drops of smoking pitch Fell on the slimy floor, with echoes dull. A human skull was stowed in every niche, A toad with phosphor eyes within each skull, Which made more awful seem the awful gloom, And showed yet hid the horrors of the room; While to and from each skull, 'mid ghostly moans, Danced scores of headless human skeletons, Making most horrid rattlings with their fleshless bones.

Then somewhere overhead a raven croaked,—And all at once the Scribe felt freezing chills, In all his nerves. With fright he almost choked. Down all his being through went awful thrills, Till shook his limbs, and chattered loud his teeth. His blood he felt grow cold, his face grow pale, His hair upraised, and almost went his breath, Till mind and strength alike began to fail, And life itself did seem within the reach of death.

But sight remained,—with powers magnified! Horror of horrors! at his very side, Appeared a monstrous demon nondescript! Ghastly and huge,—all disproportionate; Of every awful beast conglomerate, And like an octopus, with tentacles equipped.

Its huge ribs rattled, and its hip-bones creaked.

Awful its head, with horns on front and side;

Its jaws had tusks, but yet its mouth was beaked.

Most deadly stings had both its tail and tongue,

Which 'mid dire hissings darted far and wide,—

And all about their slimy poisons flung,

While like a crouching tiger's glowed its eyes.

Thus seeming masked in every horrid guise,

That could appall even a devil's soul,

With vengeful growl the monster passed from sight,—

Or else was by the darkness swallowed whole, Leaving the Scribe so paralyzed with fright He knew not how nor when, nor whither to take flight.

Save dropping pitch nothing the silence broke,— Till turned each toad and gave a horrid croak. In fear the Scribe looked round: gone was his guide.

The skulls just then put forth a ghastly glare, And all their fleshless jaws they opened wide, When loudly croaked the toads, "Beware! beware!"

He would have fled but where to go knew not, E'en had his limbs the strength to bear him out: So still he stood in fear, the victim of his doubt.

CANTO 3

THE LAUREL WREATH FOUND AND SEIZED

The darkness seemed to fade: his guide returned, Holding a skull which like a lantern burned,-A bloated toad within with phosphor eyes. Pale as a ghost appeared the giant guide, Whose looks did strike the Scribe with great surprise.

"Oh, God, what awful agony!" he cried. "That goblin fiend that guards the gate of Hell!" Then on the shoulders of the Scribe he fell, And deeply groaned, as though from fright he would have died

"The Wreath I seized,—when oh, his yellow eyes Glared through my soul like to a flame of fire And all my strength awhile did paralyze: So awful was the fury of his ire. To God I prayed,—grabbed my phylacteries,— Which stunned the demon like a lightning flash. The monster paused; just then I made a dash,-

And here I am, but oh, sick unto death, Could an immortal die." His head he laid Against the Scribe's, and heaved a mighty breath Of agony intense: such pain his fright had made.

Then came a hiss mixed with a rattling sound; Enough a very devil to astound.

"Great God, it comes,—the fiend!" the giant cried; "The Wreath is missed: I have it here, all right." A prayer he breathed, and as the fiend he spied His lantern skull he hurled with all his might And smashed it o'er his head. Another prayer, Then upward through the gloom they sped in fright,

While deep below they heard an awful yell
Of mighty rage mixed with a wild despair.
The goblin fiend had found himself outdone,
And with impunity the gate of Hell
Had been by force profaned; its Wreath of Laurel won.

Soon all the horrors of these scenes did end; When said the guide: "This Wreath you longed to read:

An Angel bid me come, and aid extend, (For who resolves and tries will sure succeed.) Awful I knew would be the sacrifice The gate of Hell to brave this Wreath to gain,—Thrown o'er the lofty walls of Paradise Because for angel hearts, its words too full of pain.

"That dismal cave is Hell's dark vestibule,-The only way its awful gate to reach, The only light to guide a lantern-skull: So taking one from out the nearest niche I ventured forth. Just then a raven croaked. Knowing my time was short away I sped: The goblin guard by that foul bird invoked Suspicioning came in. While here he stayed The gate of Hell I reached, and seized the Wreath, Which somehow seemed to be a heavy load. "Beware, beware!" croaked forth my lantern toad, And loud the skull did snap its shining teeth. That goblin fiend rushed back with rattling bones. My lantern skull those headless skeletons Did strive to seize: each claimed it was his own, And for a little while, I thought I'd be o'erthrown.

"When back I started lo, the fiend appeared, Striking with claws and horns, and tongue and tail,—

And tentacles; its horrid eye-balls glared
Like flaming fire. My limbs began to fail.
Just then I prayed and my phylacteries flashed.
The monster paused,—away I wildly dashed,
And soon was here, though hardly know I how,—
That toad filled skull and Wreath tight in my hands;

My guide and guard that Angel I avow;— And so fulfilled have I her firm commands. Potent my prayer and these phylacteries." Upon the giant's breast the Scribe here read:
"I am, all God; Thou art, all Son; He is,
All Holy Ghost: Jehovah, Three in One:
By whom all things in Heaven and earth are done."
Upon these words all demons look in dread.
His knees the Scribe did bend, and humbly bowed his head.

The Wreath, recovered thus from Hell's abyss
The Scribe did read, careful no word to miss;
No picture, sign nor trope to overlook;
And when from the last leaf his eyes he took,
Lo, there he lay upon the earth alone,
Near by his side the maiden's graven stone;
And that good giant, and the Wreath both gone!
There was that epitaph, all plain to sight;
And there that rose-bud crushed, in sad display.
Gone dark-faced Eve, gone her black mother,
Night;

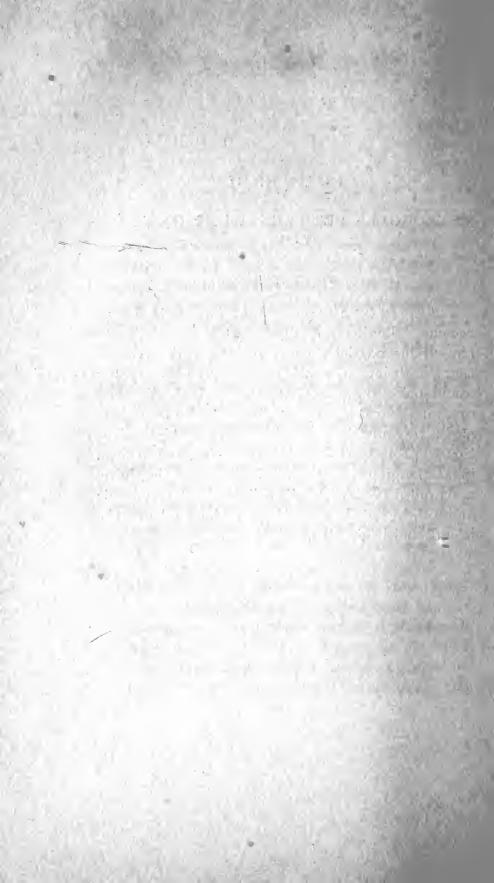
While in the east the cock proclaimed the dawn of day.

CHAPTER II

STRUGGLES BETWEEN AMBITION AND LOVE

PROEM

Influenced by a dream calling on him to act as became a Legion, the Youth, while confessing to himself his passionate love for the Maid, realizes that she being an exile's daughter, to marry her would bring down upon him the King's displeasure, and bar his way to honor and fame. He meditates upon his duty to his name, his aspiration to prove worthy of his great sire, and his own innate longing for glory. He finds, on the shore, a stranded boat with "Fame" for its figure-head; and believes it is a call upon him to leave the island, and begin his quest of fame.



CANTO 1

THE YOUTH'S VISION OF DUTY

THEIR heinous viciousness to mitigate
So that good men their words would tolerate,
Thus did the Scribe the Laurel Leaves translate.
Fit did the first Leaves seem for angels' eyes,
And would to souls of saints work no surprise.
(So sin, at first, oft comes adorned in seemly guise.)

While through the Maiden's soul sweet thoughts did creep,

(As in the Myrtle Leaves the poet sings,)
The Youth upon his hammock lay in sleep,
Beneath a sheltering rock with tentlike wings,—
One time the Maid's habitual retreat,
And still adorned with her bright furnishings,—
A place those pirates made, their plunder to secrete.

While thus he slept, behold Legion the First, He who had conquered so at Baldurbane, And by that frantic mother been so cursed, With all his progeny. Clad in bright chain He was, his helmet on, his spear in hand, His shield upon his arm, and his great brand Hung by his side, with hilt of shining brass,— A knight so strong, and brave, no king did e'er surpass.

Upon the Youth he looked with awful eyes,
As when a thunder cloud makes dire the skies;
And all the earth seemed darkened by his frown.
His lips moved not, but harsh those eyes looked down.

With awe the Youth was struck, and in his soul A voice he heard plain as the thunder's roll, That shamed him for a flagrant truancy. "Behold you here, a Legion's progeny," It said, or seemed to say; "wasting your day Upon this isle in dalliance astray, While your great sires look from Valhalla down To see you win a fame, worthy of their renown.

"Deserted and forlorn is Shonbirg Hall,
As though its lords were dead, or worse,—in thrall;
And no heir left, worthy their noble strain.
Fear you that woman's curse at Baldurbane?
Think you a life that ne'er doth armor don
Better than knightly deeds on battle-plain,
And shouts of victory for glory won;
While the Valkyries swoop from heights above
To bear away, in pride, the dying chiefs they love?

"Oh, Odin, lord of all, and mighty Thor, Whom I have honored with my breath and blood, Risking my all to prove a conqueror, And thinking glorious death the greatest good,-How can it be that one of Legion born His princely heritage should treat with scorn; By pairing with a branded exile's child, (Who, by some charm, his spirit hath beguiled;—)

Which with the Court would blast his chance for fame:

And cast a stain, the first, upon the Legion name.

"Of all great things beneath the lofty skies,-Greater than fame or wealth, titles or lands,-Honor unstained we Legions ever prize; And to our minds it ever foremost stands. Wake to your duty high; this island flee, Your boat fear not to launch on fame's bright sea. No coward's blood lurks in a Legion's veins! No coward's act a Legion's record stains." Then came a thunder clap and raven's croak,-And startled in his soul, half dazed, the Youth awoke.

Much pondered he upon this vision's talk, Which seemed a message from the other world, Blazing his way plain as a flag unfurled; And bidding him straight-way therein to walk, His uttermost to do glory to gain,

Despite that vengeful ban at Baldurbane. Then came the doubt, did he that "honor" know Whereof his dream did speak so strong and plain, To which, all else above, allegiance he did owe.

While thus in revery deep again he slept;—
And in his dreams much grieved he was, and wept.
Then lo, his mother came, with look of saint,—
Such as she wore, when she that locket gave,
Save that no grief with tears her face did paint.
She neither smiled nor frowned; her brow and cheek

Smooth and serene as sky o'er ocean wave
At morn in placid May. Thus did she speak:
"Ask you what 'honor' is, Legion, my son;—
Thou who should be honor's bright champion?
'Tis that concept of souls noble and true
Which prompts the very right ever to do,
The kindest, purest thing ever to think,
The straightest, highest path ever to tread,
The truest thought and word ever to speak,
From all that's mean and low ever to shrink,
Whatever's false and vile ever to dread,
What pains or wrongs the weak never to do nor seek.

"Honor strictly forbids the smallest wrong, All women treats with courteous reverence, And bids men fight or die in their defence, The weak protects in right against the strong, One's country loves as Heaven's favored land, Regards one's name and lineage a command Such deeds to do as all good men will love, No secret vice nor wicked thought to know, And nought to do angels will not approve, True faith to keep with all, the high and low, And nought to take or keep that's not one's own, (Be it a trifle vile, or mighty throne,) To keep a spotless name ever in view; To aim the right to do is honor's pledge, And aught wicked to think or wrong to do, Honor regards a sin, more vile than sacrilege."

Then through the Youth an awful shudder went At thought of sacrilege, that heinous crime Far worse than sin; for sin one can repent, And from his soul wash out the awful grime; But sacrilege dooms e'en the penitent. His eyes he oped, and daylight was at hand. Upon another world he seemed to wake,—A world where honor first of all did stand, Where he would battle strong for glory's sake And great renown and splendid titles gain, E'en though on him should fall the ban of Baldurbane.

While did the Scribe the Laurel Leaves translate, Oft did he wonder what would be his fate, And Yndafrene's, if fierce within his soul Ambition won, at last, complete control, While dreams of fame his heart did captivate,— No answer having come unto his mystic scroll.

CANTO 2

THE YOUTH'S DEEP LOVE AND HIGH RESOLVE

Upon the cliff that looked towards the sea, Where he and she had sat that moonlit night, And looked, and thought, and loved so silently, The Youth at early morn did stand contrite, Thinking of her and his great pedigree, And thus soliloquized as though in revery:

"Yes, I confess she's everything to me.

Her do I love with love deep as yon sea,

High as yon sky, and pure as new moon's beam;

And never can my passion have surcease.

She's all I e'er can hope, or think, or dream;

In face most fair, in heart a very saint,

Angel incarnate, beauty's masterpiece,

Beyond man's tongue to tell, or artist's brush to

paint.

"So rare a flower with such a sweet perfume, Never before below the skies did bloom. Of gentle speech, kind deeds and gracious ways, Far, far above the brightest tints of praise. While words are vain my passion to express, Yet through my very soul they effervesce. Oh, paragon of human loveliness!" Just here from out the sky the white dove flew, And lighting near did bow its head and coo. But on the Maid not on the bird his mind: So to its coo was deaf, and to its presence blind.

"My very soul she holds a prisoner. Oh, I do love her, I do worship her. To do aught less would be to do her wrong, And wrong her I could not and human be. Within my heart she's wrapped for surety, Like some rare jewel in a casket strong, All iron bound held fast by lock and key: And save the owner none ever allowed to see.

"My idol she, ever before my eyes, And in my thoughts,—awake, or when in dreams. My very soul she doth all magnetize, And transfused through my own her spirit seems. My heart and soul has she, and hers have I, And thus will be unto the day I die,-We twain, wedded as one in perfect love, As all the angels know, and all the saints above.

"But marry her that can I never do, (Keeping her father's shame wholly from view,) E'en if in law and conscience all released From that sweet troth pledged in the city park.

First, here's no law to sanction, and no priest The holy marriage rites to celebrate. To me she's like the sacred Hebrew ark, Which none did dare to touch, until made consecrate.

"Then, I'm a Legion, she an exile's child;
My name revered, but hers, alas, reviled.
In honor with the King and Court I stand,
She and her father both in deep disgrace,
And neither dares the King and Court to face.
'Tis true, she says he has been wrongly banned,
But how dare I dispute the King's decree?
To marry her would next to treason be,
And in his hostile eyes, but rank disloyalty."

Now came his last night's dream to memory,
And deep he pondered its significance:
"Surely all fancy's work such dreams must be,
And yet too apposite to be mere chance."
Then looked he down, and turning half-way round,
(As though just then his purpose he did shift,)
With vigor stamped his right foot on the ground;
And striking his right hand into his left
Thus spoke aloud, the while he sternly frowned:
"Resolved I am! To Shonbirg Hall I go
Forthwith: nought else is there for me to do.
From love and her my heart I'll disengage,
And worthy prove myself of my great heritage.

"The jeweled cup of love I here decline,
Though to the brim all full of sweetest wine,
And sparkling bright the palate to entice;
And she that offers it as good and sweet
As any angel up in Paradise.
Here is the chasm, here the bridge of fate;
Beyond, the lofty heights of fame do rise,
And open, wide and high, doth shine its glittering
gate.

"Where love abides ambition cannot dwell,
As far asunder they as earth from Hell.
Who love salutes to fame doth bid adieu,
And must but water draw and timber hew.
Who drinks this wine will slave be to a wife,
And on this side be doomed to spend his life.
Then I this cup do waive,—and cross the bridge,
Resolved my name to write upon the skies;
A Legion's son can do no otherwise,
Without a crime 'gainst all his heritage.
In fame I'll live e'en though in death I bleed:"
So from the Laurel Leaves the Scribe did read.
A raven sketched thereon, that on a dove did feed.

CANTO 3

THE YOUTH'S ASPIRATIONS

Upon the shore he stood at early dawn,
Ere yet the night from earth had wholly gone,
A troubled look upon his manly face.
His eyes were gazing far, and thus he mused:
"Oh, that gross flesh the spirit should debase;
And that the soul by words should be confused;
For there are thoughts too subtle for mere words,
(As never cage so fair as are its birds;)
And sublime feelings, subtler still than thought,
Which rule our lives when through our souls inwrought.

Into the world away, I know not where,
These thoughts and feelings like some destiny
Do force me on, as tides within the sea
Great ships once in their grasp do drag afar;
Or as men's steps are ruled, by some controlling
star."

Daring his voice and resolute his look.

Then from the beach a smooth flat shell he took,
And threw it slantwise on the billowy sea.

From wave to wave it skipped as if in glee,
And rising landed gleaming on a rock,
As though it did, forsooth, both winds and waters
mock.

"Good omen that!" he cried exultantly: And leaped and laughed and clapped his hands in glee.

"O'er winds and waves it shines victorious,-Bright and secure as though within a port. If feebly thrown it would have fallen short, And 'neath the sea have sunk inglorious. Thus to adversity the coward yields, And forthwith creeps downcast, into far humbler fields.

"But let one bravely strive, and like that shell Above misfortune's waves he'll grandly rise. And soar sublime into the shining skies,-Despite the curse of hag, or hate of Hell. Each stumbling-block he'll make a stepping-stone; And ever brave and always venturesome, He'll struggle on until he wins a throne, Ever o'ercoming most, where most are overcome.

"All bright the hopes that in my bosom throng; Oh, how for deeds of fame my soul doth long! Would I had lived to fight with Charlemagne! A paladin, renowned in tale and song; Armed cap-a-pie upon a horse most stout, Charging the Paynim like a hurricane, Routing all hostile hosts, as lions rout The wolves and jackals which their haunts profane:

And after slaughtering foes the world throughout,

Despite that awful ban at Baldurbane, Return in health to Shonbirg Hall again, All crowned in glory with a coronet, And wed a bride as fair as Margaret,— Perhaps that little maid, whom in the park I met."

Then 'gainst a rock his body he reclined, While thoughts like these came oozing through his mind:

"Incessant action is the only key
That opes the door of fortune's treasure-chest.
Pray not that Heaven some good may us decree,
But vow that we ourselves will do our best,
And take advantage both of wind and tide."
Warmed by such thoughts, at last aloud he cried:
"Oh, give me deeds not words, ripe fruits not
flowers;

Give me the chance and I will bring the powers.

The fig that nations feeds no bloom displays,

The dogwood that doth feed nor man nor beast,

Fills all the forest with its flowery sprays,

Professing most and yet doing the least.

Act then I will; and not in words alone

Put my resolve, but grave it in the stone

Of my unchanging soul, plain as a creed,

That it I'll ever see, and seeing heed."

So from the Laurel Leaves the Scribe did read;

And thus they did ambition glorify,—

Written on Mars they were, beneath its blood-red sky.

CANTO 4

AMBITION STRIVES TO CONQUER LOVE

Roaming all leisurely along the beach,
The Youth next day a little yacht espied,
Cast by the storm beyond the billows' reach,
With sails and compass, tools and furniture,
All ready to be launched upon the tide,
Placed there 't would seem by fate, his spirit to
allure.

Close to its prow excited quick he sped,
Tingling his hair and in his throat a lump,
Like one who fears some goblin near may stand.
His eyes he fixed upon the figure-head:
And angel's form it had, within her hand
A bay-leaf crown, and in her mouth a trump,
Above her graceful head a starry halo grand;

White was her robe with laurel leaves inwove;
One foot but lightly touched a zoneless globe,
The other rested on a white sea-dove;

A broken scythe and shattered hour-glass,
(Whose sand was gone), beneath her flowing robe;
Her trump though gilded once seemed now but brass.

"That effigy," he said, admiringly,
"In truth was by a cunning artist wrought.
But here's a name,—obscured by moss and sand."

These he in part removed with hurried hand. "No, no; it surely cannot be," he thought, As nervously, but close, the characters he scanned.

Although the letters shone forth fairly plain,
He changed position and he looked again,
Like one who doubted much what he beheld.
The more he cleaned the plainer shone the word:
"A-m, b-i, t-i, o-n," he spelled.
"Ambition! strange indeed! and then that bird!
Forsooth, scarcely can I believe my sight.
"Tis true ambition is an angel bright,
That with no zone of earth will be content.
Both latitude and longitude she spurns;
No part though great, ocean nor continent,
Will satisfy her boundless appetite.
To be The One Supreme her spirit burns.
That dove all crushed! surely the meaning's clear:
Ambition o'er both love, and life, doth domineer."

"How strange these happenings!" the Youth did muse.

"Somehow they seem my conduct to accuse,
And charge that Legion's soul in me has shrunk.
Or else they are a message to me sent,
Calling on me, a Legion, to awake.
Circean draughts have I unwitting drunk,
Changing my nature, making me content
Upon this isle to live for woman's sake,
From fame and honor a base fugitive,

While all my soul with her strong spell she sways? Like great Ulysses in the ancient days Contented on Calypso's isle to live,
While his great realm and queen, did suffer from his craze.

"Make I a record here that's truly bright?

Apostate am I not in father's sight,

No longer fit to be a Legion's heir?

Forgotten have I what to him I owe?

No! by my soul's salvation I do swear,

I've not forgot! ten thousand times no, no!

No longer will I dally here with doubt;

Resolved am I this day to face about,

And from the sway of love and sloth be free.

Ambition rules henceforth my every thought,

And all my plans and deeds, ambition's own shall be."

No longer could the Scribe the strain endure; Ambition now loomed plain, a demon vile, That snared the soul by its most wicked lure; And fame would win by means that did defile: So, then and there, the Scribe ambition did abjure.

CANTO 5

THE YOUTH MAKES THE EAGLE HIS SYMBOL

Just then a golden eagle soared on high As though resolved to sail up through the sky, Circling the zenith as an angel would, Until so high he scarcely could be viewed. Entranced and all inspired by sight so grand Rooted to earth the Youth awhile did stand; And when, at last, words came unto his aid, "There is no other bird like unto him," he said.

"High on the highest crag sits he alone;
Afar he gazes down on land and sea;
No king of earth e'er had so high a throne,
Nor more supreme was in his sovereignty.
Above all clouds and storms he circles high,
The lightnings he beholds with placid eye,
And though rains drench the plains, his plumes
are ever dry.

"No partners has he in his lofty throne,
None but his mate beside him e'er is seen;
Supreme he rules his realm,—and all alone.
Only one king is there,—only one queen.
Around the sun, near unto heaven's dome,
'Tis his delight on wide-spread wings to roam;
And in the highest skies, he's ever most at home.

"The lion claims the lordship of the land, And like a monarch's is his awful roar. Though grand he looks upon his throne of sand, Yet narrow is the realm he reigneth o'er, And hides he out when comes man's caravan; But you, oh eagle, soar 'bove beast and man, And scorn alike their realm, their power, and their ban.

"Of all the birds Jove chose you for his own, When on Olympus ruled he all the world; And high you sat beside his golden throne 'Mid thunderbolts all ready to be hurled. When Cæsar's legions conquered land and sea Thy golden image led to victory, And high and bright you shone, when came their jubilee.

"Then you, oh eagle, shall my symbol be, And I like you have a wide sovereignty." Just then shot down from out the highest sky That soaring eagle's loud responsive cry. Down looked the Youth like one in deepest thought,

When once again his eyes fell on the boat. "All this," said he, "I seem to understand: This boat, that word thereon, you eagle grand, That vision of my sire, and his most stern command.

"These things all speak in trumpet tones, like fame's,

In words as plain as is the face of day.

Here is the boat; its mission it proclaims:

I'm bid to enter in, and—sail away.

What needs a Legion more, if high his aims?

No curse of Baldurbane my steps shall stay!"

While thus ambition in his spirit spoke

Not far away did sound a raven's croak,

As though his fate it would prognosticate:

So did the Scribe the Laurel Leaves translate,—

On one of which, like an archangel bright,

Shone Legion, with an eagle 'bove his head,

His boat all rigged; and, plainly in his sight,

Shone fame, eastward afar, with glory o'er her spread.

CANTO 6

THE YOUTH'S MUSINGS ON DESTINY

In meditation rapt, along the strand
Did walk the Youth, with slow but steady tread.
Blind were his eyes to ocean, sky and land,
Nor did he seem to care whither his footsteps
led.

"But who from fate can flee?" inquired the Youth. Go where one will 'tis destiny that leads;
Do what we will 'tis fate that shapes our deeds.

Most strange! all, all is mystery, forsooth!
God's self is mystery, and Heaven and Hell;
E'en life itself, and growth, and death, and good and ill.

"Then why strive I to loose this Gordian knot
That binds to circumstance this mortal clay?
We're born, we grow, we die,—and—are forgot!
On the eternal charts of destiny
My steps are marked, unchangeable for aye;—
Charts wrought of adamant by God's own hand,
On that first day when time itself began,
When all that has been, or will be, was planned,
And foreordained was every act of man.
By magnets drawn we travel in a groove.
Fate's puppets are we all; the iron wires
Her hands do hold, and, as she pulls, we move,—
In all things doing what her sovereign will requires.

"A strange charm leads me on: its look so bright;
And fame for me I pray it may portend;
But be it false mirage, or Israel's light,
I'll follow it all bravely to the end,—
Though all the world pronounce my action rash:
Lead it to glory, or to infa—" Crash!
Into the quiet sea, with awful shock,
From neighboring cliff down fell a towering rock.
Far through the earth and sky its echoes rolled,
As though, with thunders huge, some mighty demon bowled.

Shocked was the Youth, and for a season dumb:
No thought had he but wonder and surprise.
Reason and fancy were alike o'ercome,
And nought was he but startled ears and eyes.
"What can that mean? From out my mouth it took

An awful word 'twere better I'd not said,"
At last he slowly thought, with solemn look:
"So, one vow less have I in honor's book.
Less must I use my heart, and more my head.
Since by a heated heart youth often is misled."

Afar along the strand slowly he walked,
And pondering deeply to himself thus talked:
"That boat! Fame at its prow; Death at its helm!

Perchance therein some hopeful youth did sail;
Ambition his bright pilot. Came the gale;
The same, perhaps, that did me overwhelm.
He skill, or courage, or equipment lacked;
Fate was his enemy, fame not his friend;
And lo, his boat upon the strand here wrecked,
His body fiendlike sharks and sea-dogs rend,
Or by the beaks of hungry ravens pecked;
And such, alas, may be his ignominious end."

The Youth's surmise was near the truth, indeed, For while he spoke, but few steps from the spot, Ravens and vultures on his corpse did feed Who, by ambition fired, had sailed the yacht. The boat the Youth had seen, but the torn corpse had not.

"But why thus think and talk, and never act?"
Resumed the Youth. "'Tis action that achieves;
Talk fiction is, but action is a fact.
Deeds are ripe fruits, while words are but mere leaves.

Action's a man while talk a woman is:
Man lives in deeds, woman in reveries.
But man and woman wed perfection make.
Then let my thought and action be as one,
Nor rest until my word in deed is done;
Then soon my destiny I'll surely overtake.

"Fame's steed, which gallops through the upper air,

Methinks is near to bear me up on high;
His thrilling neigh within my soul I hear,
Inviting me to mount his back and fly.
Dimly I see, indeed, his very form,
His tail and rainbow wings extended far,
His eyes blazing like stars seen through a storm,
His nostrils wide and snorting meteors,
His bright hoofs pawing up great clouds of gold,
Which like a glory does his form enfold.

Anxious to go; he snuffs afar the wars;
His long and glittering mane he elevates.
Lengthy the road, many and high the gates:
For none of these a trice he hesitates.
His forelock long dangles above his brow,
Ready for him to grasp who's made the vow.
Who goes must mount at once: delay he hates,
And cowards scorns: Resolved to go I am,—and
now!"

So from the Laurel Leaves the Scribe did read;
On one of which was pictured fame's bright steed,
In form and colors splendid and sublime,
Which to describe, in vain, were human words, or
rhyme.

CHAPTER III

THE TRIUMPH OF AMBITION OVER LOVE

PROEM

The spell of ambition is more powerful than the spell of love, in a Legion's heart. Besides, thoughts of his betrothed, and his duty to her, greatly perplex him, he not then knowing that she and Margie are the same. He prepares the boat for his departure, and acquaints the Maid with his resolve. In vain her distress and pathetic pleadings: he bids her farewell, and turns away. Then darkness covers the earth, and fills their souls; while the Scribe fears that Yndafrene has frowned on his riddle.



CANTO 1

THE YOUTH'S SOLILOQUY ON THE MAID

The Youth had for his voyage launched the yacht, Finding all right its tackle and its frame; And for its masthead had a banner wrought, With motto and device denoting fame. All day he'd spent engaged in work, and thought, And eve's long shadows stretched o'er sea and land.

Ere his accustomed evening haunts he sought,—So all absorbed was he in what he did, and planned.

Upon a rock he stood beside the strand,
And gazed abroad upon the waters wide.
"How small this isle compared with kingdoms grand,"

He said; "and small the soul that here can bide.

I feel constrained like one in prison cell:

'T would take away my breath, were I here forced to dwell.

"No, here I cannot stay: depart I must, This lovely girl alone doth hold me here: So good and kind, so sweet, and full of trust; Like nature's child, all artless and sincere, Sinless as Eve ere Satan made her err. Her bosom's door is ever open wide; No thought, nor hope, nor wish has she to hide. Surely on earth there is no one before, And heaven itself can scarce have her superior.

"Adorned with every charm that can attract, Perfect she is in feature, face and form, In mind, and heart and speech, and every act: Her thought so bright, her temperament so warm. Entranced by her sweet witchery I pause, And nought can do but only think of her; She is so very fair, so very dear. E'en like a magnet all my thoughts she draws; Down at her feet I kneel,—a worshiper, And my eyes love her beauty to devour; So, if much longer on this isle I stay, Her slave I soon shall be, without the power Her presence to depart, or even say her nay.

"Who Legion is must wear a Legion's chains, An honored name to bear, and in one's veins To carry noble blood, make one all bound In word and deed to be a noble man, And keep one's honor bright, one's name nowned,---

Of all that's grand and high, ever the partisan.

"Unto my soul she is so very dear, Were I not Legion I would marry her. Contented in her arms to live and love,

Making this isle an ocean Paradise; But being Legion I must worthy prove Of all the name of Legion signifies: Degenerate would I be, should I do otherwise.

"No! here's my Rubicon, and now I cross: Before is gain, behind a lucky loss. Her will I wed to whom when but a child Me my great father firmly did betroth. He and the church would deem my fame defiled Should I at nought set his most solemn oath: 'T would be, in very deed, a crime against them both.

"I feel as though unto my goal I'd leap. Living action is, thinking is like dreams, And dreaming's next to sleep: a stone doth sleep And only sleep,—and hence remains a stone. Long is the road between the is and seems, And long the road, between a dream and throne. Men's dreams are but the ferment of their flesh, When it imagination doth enmesh. Action of spirit is, life's grandest crown, The sword by which man's victories are won. Alas, how many spirits plumed with wings To fly among the stars like mighty kings, For deeds most glorious full well equipped, By love's fair hands have had their pinions clipped, thenceforth fluttered feebly near ground,-

Like Antony, the great, by Cleopatra bound.

"Try by a straw, this rock to overthrow,
Try by a spark, this ocean to consume,
Try by a web, to catch the winds that blow,
Try by some soot, yon sun to turn to gloom,
Try by a word, a thunderbolt to stay,
Try by a match, the night to turn to day,
Try by some spell, to make immense this isle;—
But never try great glory to achieve
By basking in a lady's loving smile,
Though she the fairest be, since God made mother
Eve.

"Besides, my country owns my sword and spear;
And I am recreant to linger here,
Like one who never felt within him fanned
That holy flame the love of native land.
So, both for fame and country will I fight,
Like all the Legions in the days gone by;
My King and country stand for what is right,
And earth's supremest fame, for them to fight and
die!"

Here in a painting bright as May appeared
A mighty army, on a field wide spread,
A royal banner in the air high reared,
And knights in armor, by a Decius led,—
While written overhead, upon the sky,—
"Immortal are their names who for their country
die."

CANTO 2

THE YOUTH TELLS THE MAID OF HIS RESOLVE

Oppressed in heart and mind by his dire strait, The Youth continued thus to meditate: "Oh, dear unto our life our body is, And dear unto our body is our life: Between the two are tender sympathies. More close than those between a man and wife. How great the groans from each when they dispart!

For then it is that anguish breaks the heart. Yet rather would I here my life lay down Would that forever all our troubles drown. My own, perchance, it would, but not so hers; For grief would rack her heart, through all her coming years.

"Oh, sometimes greatness is a heavy load, Honor a mighty burden hard to bear, And family pride often a dreadful goad That drives to desperate deeds a luckless heir. Yet so it is, fate puts me on this road, And I will travel it, straight on without despair.

"Here comes she now, with joy her face ablaze. Oh, what a dream of perfect loveliness! What rapture of delight is in her gaze! Oh, soul of Legion, help me in this stress!

Be strong, my heart; 'tis infamy or fame. Remember, Legion's only son I am, And what a debt I owe, unto that noble name."

"How glad am I to find you!" she did cry.
"I've searched for you for hours, but found no trace,

While my poor heart was all in agony.
You out of sight my soul seems out of place,
But with you near I've no anxiety,
And joy supreme displaces all my fears."
His hand she kissed, and bathed it with her tears,
Her face aglow with ecstasy and love;—
While on a rock above, did coo a white sea dove.

Oh, what a strain it was upon his heart
Not to enfold her in his loving arms,
Vow tenderly never from her to part,
And soothe away all of her soul's alarms.
Oh, how he longed to kiss away her tears,
And pour his passion in her willing ears.
But, as when Rome's imperators did ride
In glorious triumph, and the shouts began,
A slave there was who stood close by his side
And bade him not forget he was a man;
So, in the midst of all this sweet acclaim,
A voice did seem to say: "Remember Legion's
fame."

Quickly his cool reserve her eye did note.
"Why look so sad?" she asked: "Are you unwell?"
His conscience here the Youth full deeply smote,
While he his raging passion sought to quell.
"Not sick but destiny," he did explain,
Feeling a twinge at thought of Baldurbane.
Within her soul these words rung like a knell.
While all her loving heart was pierced by sudden
pain.

"Oh, tell me all that on your conscience preys," She did implore, gazing into his face.

"I would," he said, "could I my feelings phrase."
"Oh, speak!" she begged, and round his neck did
place

All lovingly her arms. "Please let me know. Your words, and manner strange, do cause me deep distress."

"In my heart, too," he said, "there is a woe.

What it all is I cannot well express;

But in my soul a voice I seem to hear

That warns me we must part." "Part? part?

not so!

Absence from you a day I could not bear.
You fill my heart as sunshine fills the sky,
And if you leave nought can I do but die,"
She cried in agony; then at his feet
Did crouch, and in her hands her face did hide.
"Oh, Legion, leave me not," she did entreat,
And on the ground awhile, in silent grief did bide.

CANTO 3

THE MAID'S APPEAL TO THE YOUTH

Hearing no word nor movement of the Youth,
And all resolved to learn the utter truth,
The Maiden rose, and looked into his eyes.
"You will not go," she said, 'mid many tears,
Imploringly, holding his hands in hers.
"If you do go I'll nothing have to prize.
I thought you were a gift from ocean's tide,
To live forever happy by my side.
My heart's full love you have, that you do know;
If not my words my acts have told you so.
Legion, have you no love? say,—must you go?"
Sobs choked her voice, her grief beyond control:
Upon a rock she sat, while sorrow rent her soul.

When calm she grew the Youth sat by her side,
And strove to stay the flow of sorrow's tide.
Vague hints he gave of some most sacred ties
Whereby his sire his will did compromise.
He told her how his duty to his name,
His self-respect, honor and enterprise,
Called him to Shonbirg Hall, and fields of fame;
How that his King and country owned his sword,
And he must homage do, or be ignored;
And to a Legion that was more than death deplored.

"I pray you, darling, hearken to my word." With open eyes like one inspired she spoke, For mighty were the thoughts that in her stirred. Gone were her tears, and sanctified her look;— (Perchance that Angel was inspiring her With words and thoughts that would the Youth deter.)

"Deep in my soul upswelling strong I feel Some truths I can't repress, yet cannot all reveal.

"That world away you think so grand and great, Where kings you say live in such royal state,-Oh, turn away from it,-be not its thrall, There men do hate, and evil deeds commit; Within their mouths bright honeyed words, but gall

Within their hearts, and daggers in their sleeves. Hypocrisy rules every word and deed, Most does he win and hold, who most deceives, And they who play most false, do oftenest succeed.

"There selfishness the mainspring of all trade: Oh, 'tis a wicked, wicked, wicked world, Where men and women move in masquerade, One's character to all a mystery made, And one's real motives in his bosom furled: So have I read, and so my father says, Who knows, alas too well, that great world's wicked ways.

"You say ambition calls you far away, That fame awaits you with a golden crown, And destiny forbids you here to stay Where you would be no better than a clown. "My father once was by ambition led, And in its many mazes long did tread. Nobly his duty did to King and State, Among the greatest none than he more great, On battle fields poured out his precious blood, (As though made up of nought but common mud,) Proving himself the bravest 'mong the brave, And ne'er to man did bow, nor favor crave;-And what at last his recompense and fate? An exile's lot, of treason e'en accused; His home, and lands, and serfs all confiscate; His name and fame befouled, his friends abused; And he and his, alas, in every way misused.

"To such a world oh, venture not again,
No place it is for good and honest men.
Be brave: the power of destiny defy.
Dare do what's right in sight of Heaven's eye,
Against the tyranny of fate rebel,
And all its figments from your heart expel.
How few their names preserved in history
Of all earth's millions who have longed for fame!
So have I heard my father oft declaim.
Why seek a fame which is but vanity?
Oh, Legion, stay with me, and choose another name."

CANTO 4

FAME DEFINED BY THE YOUTH

Long was their talk and eloquent her strain, Inmixed with sighs, and tears, and many sobs, "It grieves my very soul to give you pain." Gently he said; "but in my bosom throbs My father's blood, and worthy of his name Would I not be at all, did I not yearn for fame."

"What is this fame?" asked she, with searching look.

"Ask you what's fame?" Without delay he spoke: "Fame is the perfume of resplendent deeds, All gloriously achieved, great foes despite And mighty obstacles, which each man reads And ever keeps in mind. Fame is the sight Of one's full name in letters large and bright, High in the sky, forever there to bide. Fame is by nations to be deified, Decreed earth's greatest king and general, Outshining Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, great Charlemagne, and Constantine, As doth the mighty sun the little stars outshine;

"Be eulogized wherever there are throngs, And glorified above all emperors, One's little deeds rehearsed in children's songs, One's mighty acts the themes of orators, When thousands meet at some great festival; Fame is the gorgeous dazzling capital Of that colossal column reared sublime, Earth's deathless deeds unto the end of time, With circumstance of act, and place and date, In august grandeur to commemorate, Secured by every bond of science, fact and fate.

"All this ambition seeks,—and vastly more;
For ne'er content it is though great its store;
And never satisfied its heart or eye.
Oh, there's a glory brighter far, and higher,
Then e'en the sun's when blazing in the sky;
A song, more ravishing than Heaven's choir
E'er sung; a drink, sweeter than wine, that fills
The heart and soul with joy's ecstatic thrills;
A trump, louder than Gabriel's to proclaim
To all the universe one's peerless name,
And bid all men and angels to applaud
Him in great glory throned, amid the sky,—a
god!

"That glory, song and drink,—and trumpet's sound,

That scene in heaven, a king in glory crowned, Of such is boundless fame, in all the world renowned.

"Ambition is a longing to be first, And for these things of fame it has a thirst; But when one has them all they are as nought Until the czarship of the universe
Is reached, and every other scepter sought,
And every badge that glory great confers;
While kings and dukes, princes and presidents,
All whom mankind respect or reverence,
Poets and prophets and all learned men,
Who use the crucible, the tongue or pen,
In all the west and east, and south and north,
On bended knees with upraised heads and hands,
Their plaudits daily in one's ears pour forth,
While roar of trumpets, drums, and music bands,
Fill with their peals, so grand, all skies, and seas,
and lands.

"So fame is ownership of things sublime,
Which men most covet in their reveries;
Things up to which the greatest love to climb,
And gloomy are if they the prize do miss.
Great fame to win has been the Legion-lust;
In all the world none have a grander crown;
And though to die in youth it seems they must,
They die not till they've climbed to heights of
great renown."

CANTO 5

THE YOUTH'S FAREWELL

Longer they talked and darker grew the eve.

When she unto his intellect appealed,
And talked of fame, some answer she'd receive;
But when her tears and sobs her grief revealed,
So keen his pangs his words refused to come.

Thus side by side they sat, his hand in hers,
Strong was their sorrow but their tongues were dumb.

Her long-drawn sighs her heart's interpreters, While he his signs of grief, by will did overcome.

"Your heart I see is fixed, and nought am I
To you compared with fame," she said, with tears.
"Oh, say not so!" he cried: "'tis destiny
That forces me away, and domineers
My every step. A spell on me doth lie:
Some spell has always marked my sires' careers,
And with its stern behests, we nought can but comply.

"Your kindness to me here I'll ne'er forget: When back I am once more in Shonbirg Hall, Some token will I send to show my debt, And strive most hard to win your Sire's recall. And now farewell! May you be happy yet!"

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Not waiting for more words, he turned and,—left;

Nor dared he once look back, for grief his heart had cleft.

Unto her feet she rose as in a dream,
While down her cheeks most bitter tears did
stream.

No step she took but watched his fading form (As though to it her sight and thoughts were glued,)

Till out of sight: Then on her came a storm Of agony, as though it surely would Her very life forthwith sweep all away. Down on the earth she fell as in a swoon, And there like one all lifeless prostrate lay. Over her form night laid her mantle soon, While sadly overhead, the white sea dove did moan.

"For her and for myself the best I've done,"
He mused, as from the Maid he did depart.
"No other road saw I but this alone,
Where honor was; but oh, my bleeding heart!
How any more can I be really glad!
No joy of love ever I'll know again.
Would I were now a knight in armor clad,
And in my front a thousand hostile men,
That like a thunder-bolt of Heaven's wrath,
I might charge forth, rejoicing, unto death,
Leaving a hundred dead along my path,

My life-blood spilled on those I overcame;
And by such deed achieve eternal fame,—
Fulfilling, thus, that ban of Baldurbane;
Then, too, avenged this Maid of Redenfayn,—
And, may be, my betrothed, the daughter of the Dane."

Long did he muse, feeling like one to whom
All life's a blank; his conscience not quite free
From some remorse. "Death may be worse to
some,

But not to me," he said; "no, not to me;
For all my joy has suffered martyrdom."

Just here thrice croaked a raven, overhead:
So from the Laurel Leaves the Scribe in sorrow read.

Then in his soul he heard the chant of Fate, That seemed a dirge to his dead happiness, Making the heavier his sorrow's weight, And like despair increasing his distress.

THE CHANT OF FATE

"All to and fro men come and go,
With laughs of joy and wails of woe;
But I move straight ahead.
Here some say this, there some say that,
While I alone am autocrat,
And what is done I've said.

"The young do fear, the old do swear; Sad are the rich, in tears the fair; But ne'er change I my mind.
The proud defy, the humble cry, The brave resist, the cowards die:
To all I'm deaf and blind.

"What I do will time's mighty mill
Grinds out for each, his good or ill:
In vain the wish of man.
And so at last will come to pass
What I have graved on changless brass,
Be it a boon or ban."

CANTO 6

DARKNESS DRIVES AWAY THE LIGHT

And Night with all her awful shadows rose,
The day to darken, and men's eyes to close.
As on the plains descend the locust swarms.
In monstrous multitudes, darkening the sky
And earth, like wide-spread clouds in blackest
storms,

Devouring all the verdure that doth grow
Till nought but darkness on the earth doth lie,
As though from heaven did fall great clouds of
blackest snow;

So, down came Night, with all her armies vast,
Squadrons of gloomy clouds, and hosts of shades;
From Styx black hordes, from Erebus brigades,
Abettors and accomplices amassed,
Cimmerian mobs, legions of nebulas,
With mists, and smokes, and fogs, in disarrays,
Till more than half the earth with darkness was
o'ercast.

Subduing first those mighty eastern seas
That surge against the Asian Continent,
In dark array Night moved her liveries.
Her swarthy hosts of victory confident,
(For much, indeed, already had they won,)
Swept o'er the mountains huge of old Japan,
Driving the lagging soldiers of the Sun
By fierce assault towards the land of Genghis
Khan.

With wide stretched battle-front crossing the floods,

The black-horse cavalry of Erebus,
Aided by sable warriors of the woods,
Swarmed o'er the Asian shores, all valorous;
And proudly on the loftiest mountain tops,
(So high they seem indeed heaven's under-props,)
Their Stygian flags displayed victorious,
Amid applause from panthers, wolves and owls,
The hosts of Day retreating in affright.
Not yet content, but with her brow in scowls,

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Eager for conquest rode insatiate Night,
Her dark-faced myrmidons, in wide array,
Charging through vales, and all hills in their way,
The hosts of Day to capture, or destroy,
Until beneath their feet Siberia lay
Down to the mountains of the Manchu land;
Where on the snowy crests of Stanovoi
Day's shining soldiers made a long and stubborn
stand.

Stretching from seas, where summer never comes
Down to those seas where winter never goes,
With not a sound of bugles, fifes or drums,
Night's armies pressed with vigor on their foes.
Along the backbone of the Asian world,
In solid phalanx their grim hordes were hurled
Ever upon the west, like countless hosts
Of Tartar tribes aiming the western coasts
To overrun, and utterly lay waste:
And so Night's shadowy hosts, from sight those
lands effaced.

But ever on marched those black-bannered hordes,
And soon the Flowery Kingdom was laid low,
The great wall climbed, the Gobi desert passed,
And all Mongolia sunk beneath their swords.
Great Himalaya's domes of ice and snow,
Base and inglorious sunk from sight, aghast,
As though in boundless pit, by some great earthquake cast.

Scared by the owl's hoots, and bats o'erhead,
In full retreat Day's troops disordered fled,
Their bloody trails stretching towards the west,
Where limped their wounded and where lay their
dead,

Showing the carnage where their rear was pressed. Now, o'er the middle sea Night's vanguard rode, From blazing Etna to Mount Caucasus, The Urals climbed, the Norse lands overflowed,—Then with a charge, vast and tumultuous, All Europe filled with darkness and with gloom, And light and joy did curtail or consume, As if beneath the spell of some huge incubus.

His rear battalions conquered, one by one,
Beyond the Sea of Horrors fled the Sun.
Unto that western world which Eric found
While in Varangian ship he roved, outbound.
So, black-faced Night and her Cimmerian hordes
All light destroying with their shadowy swords,
Filled earth and sky with blinding shade, and
cloud,

As though to wrap the world, in one black funeral shroud.

All compassed round by billows moaning low,
And night's dark veils, which over all did flow,
Lone Redenfayn lost to the light of day,
Like a weird region looked, where ghosts might
stray,

And haunting specters wander to and fro. The boding hoots of owls, the sea-dog's bark, The croaks of ravens flitting through the dark, The moans of doves;—all seemed so comfortless. The wailings of a sad sea-lioness Who'd lost her mate, wounded and tempest-tossed, Echoed afar, her signal of distress, Like the despairing cry of soul forever lost.

Oh, Redenfayn, how black that night to you! That night, the darkest, longest, e'er they'd know, The Youth and Maid did spend in racking pain, Each minute marked with sighs and groans of woe, As if nor light nor joy they'd see again.— Its awful wrath did wreak that ban of Baldurbane!

And through the Maiden's soul, as though a scourge, Went moaning dismally Dark's gruesome dirge, Seeming her very being to infest,-As though it did rejoice, that she was so dis-

tressed.

While these most awful words the Scribe did read, Within his soul that dirge did seem to sound,-Making his heart in agony to bleed, For fear that Yndafrene had on his riddle frowned.



CHAPTER IV

ODIN'S AWFUL STORM

PROEM

The links are severed; and the Youth sailed away from the island, in quest of fame. His reveries and feelings are set forth, as he departs. Odin, seeing the Youth go forth in search of fame, and recalling that mother's ban at Baldurbane, sent forth the raven king and storm demons to fulfill the ban. An awful tempest results; but the Youth defies the ban, and battles fearlessly with the winds and the waves. The anguish of the Maid at the Youth's departure is intensified by her fear that he may have been wrecked by the storm. On becoming more calm she muses on his statement that his King and country owned his sword.

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CANTO 1

THE YOUTH SAILS AWAY

WITH dawn of day the Youth was at his yacht, Eager to sail away, lest loitering
Some mishap might invite,—fate's counterplot;
(For oft delay does loss and trouble bring.)
The Rubicon he'd crossed; to love and ease
Had bade adieu, and welcomed hate and strife,
And now faced hardship, and a strenuous life.
"Good every sign!" he cried; "bright sky, smooth seas,

Fair wind! better, the tide begins to ebb! And lo, my eagle high, above all enemies. Now destiny, begin to weave thy magic web!"

Quickly the sails he raised, the anchor shipped,
The tiller in the rudder's mortise slipped,
His flag run to the mast-head, high in air:
Blue were its folds, his eagle o'er them spread,
Holding a scroll, on which he'd written "Dare!"
Toward the sea his boat's gay prow he set,
And soon away from Redenfayn he sped.
Towards the isle his eyes he would not turn,
Lest by her form so dear they might be met,
His love to wake, and make his heart to yearn,—
For in his head he'd sworn, his bridges all to burn.

"Hail, glorious world!" he cried. "Hail all thy strife!

(For strife there would not be were there no prize.)
Hail, soul that ever dares! Hail, nobler life!
Hail, iron will! Hail, heart that's filled with pride!

Hail, eagle grand, my brother of the skies!
Hail, planet Mars, that shines as though to guide!
Hail, all that can my name immortalize!
Hail, purpose ne'er to yield nor turn aside!
Hail, fixed resolve to battle for renown!
Hail, royal victory, and fame's eternal crown!"

To all he honored thus he welcome gave,
And proudly o'er his head his hat did wave;
Then fiercely through the air to all the world
A shout of challenge and defiance hurled.
His boat across the waters fairly flew,
Without a guide or mariner, and he
The alpha and omega of the crew;
Yet were his spirits rapturous with glee.
The winds his sails kept in a constant strain,
And soon far out of sight, was island Redenfayn.

Like one who first doth feel some mighty truth, "And now again, I'm free!" exclaimed the Youth. "How sweet is liberty! free would I be E'en were my prison-pen a Paradise, My shackles love, my guard fair angel's eyes,—And nought but sunshine bright, between me and the skies.

"Now from all shackles I at last am free!
Unworthy I a Legion's pedigree
If all too weak a woman's chain to break,
And at her bid all thoughts of fame forsake.
Besides, my sire did me with vows betroth
Unto the Dane's fair girl, and I am loth
To break his pledge; for nothing could be worse
For me than live beneath my father's curse.
Would Pearl and Margie were the self-same child!
For then duty and love would be all reconciled.

"Upon a needle's point turn great events; And when above our heads blind fortune swings Her scales, one filled with evil incidents, The other with all boons and precious things, How oft some trifle turns the scales its way, And in our laps drops power, or impotence. Too short this life for quibble, or delay; For e'en the longest life is but as though a day.

Then action be my motto and my guide,—
Action incessant and most strenuous;
For actions do, at last, all things decide.
All wealth and fame in actions do begin,
And he with equal judgment who most does,
Will on life's battle-field, the greatest glories win.

"As for that woman's curse at Baldurbane Upon my house and name—it is defied!

No woman's tongue my footsteps shall restrain.

I'd rather die in youth as father died,

In battle fierce, covered with bloody wounds,
But all ablaze with glory, and with fame,
Which far and wide throughout the world resounds,

Than live a thousand years, unglorified.
Infinitely more honored is the name
Of Alexander, who the world bestrid,
But died in youth, than of Methuselah,
Who lived nine hundred years,—and nothing famous did.

"Oh, could my wish come true this would it be; To have great armies; I their chief and pride. With them by deeds of skill and bravery, Not only on the land but on the tide, (Surpassing far the myths that poets sing,) The world to conquer,—I its only king! My name in brightest stars blazed on the sky, Never to pale,—but shine forever there. And when I die my soul borne up on high. Along that royal Milky Way so fair, In chariot sublime, of rainbows made, Drawn by archangels, with their wings displayed, As when returning from victorious war, Over the route by the immortals trod, Sounding, with golden trumps, my name afar, And I, by all the world, thence worshiped as a god."

Shifted the winds; then sunk into a calm; Idly the boat's sails flapped,—all progress gone. Over the ocean roamed a dismal psalm; Some whirlwinds o'er the waves went waltzing on, In ghostly guise. To clouds the dull mists grew, And on the waters wide dark shadows threw. Portentous gloomed the sky, as though a storm did brew.

Seeing the Youth go forth, all proud of soul, His name to carve high up on glory's scroll, And thinking time it was to act again Upon that mother's ban at Baldurbane, Odin his demon forces did depute This vengeance dire in wrath to execute. The raven king he swore, with awful oath, The Youth to haunt on land and water both, To scare his soul when storms did rule the seas, Upon the land to aid his enemies. And see him overthrown ere he had reached his growth.

Then Odin sent his furies resolute All storms to rouse, all thunders to unchain, The lightnings' blazing javelins to shoot, The waves to fill with wrath, the skies with rain, All shores to wreck, all mountains to uproot .-Then north, beyond the ocean's farthest rim, Was heard the awful roar of Odin's Anakim.

A painting here the Scribe did horrify:
Out from the farthest north came blackest clouds,
And demon tempests lowered in the sky;
Fierce lightnings blazed, and billows rose in
crowds;

While over all a raven circled high.

Grim Odin's storm was on, the Youth to wreck,

Whose boat amid the gloom did seem but as a
speck!

CANTO 2

A STORM OVERTAKES THE YOUTH

A storm was on, and danger hovered nigh, Clouds thronged in troops across the darkened sky, And squalls like demons flew from wave to wave, While high in air leaped ghostlike spurts of spray. Gone was the sun; the winds began to rave; Circling the shores in greedy search of prey, Fiercely the sea-fowls did each other scold. Huge gloomy shadows on the sea did frown, High overhead loudly the thunders rolled, And here and there a bolt, hurled fiercely flashing down.

All nature in the tempest seemed engrossed; Black clouds did roam like a great wolfish host Searching with awful howlings for their prey; And, with the roaring winds, the rolling waves, The fearful shrieking of the blinding spray, The mighty blast with its infernal yell, The crashing thunders, and their hissing glaves, A frightful chaos made more horrible than Hell.

"When one's in safety on a rock-bound shore,
When smooth the sea, or but a gentle swell,
All men are sailors good; but when doth rage
The storm, the billows roll, the breakers roar,
When water, fire and air in war engage,
And dreadful dangers all around do spread,
When ropes and masts do break, and sails do rip,
When lightning shafts flash thundering 'bout one's
head,

Then comes the test, supreme, of skill in seamanship."

So thought the Youth as breasted he the storm;
And hap what might his soul was not dismayed.
Ofttimes he'd sailed the sea without alarm,
And storms before had faced; nor was afraid,
When highest loomed the waves, and loudest roared
The winds. When thunders most his ears dismayed,

When rain and hail in fiercest fury poured, And direst lightning flashed, and sails were rent, Broken were ropes and booms, and leaks were sprung;

When death itself seemed really imminent, And all about did yawn the damned abyss, Loudest did shout his all defiant tongue, "Nil desperandum!" with rebellious emphasis.

But God is in the storm, and man is nought When winds and waves combine his hopes to damp, All day for life he and his boat had fought; But drawing near was night,—and he'd no lamp, No moon, nor meteor, comet bright nor star,— Nought but the hissing lightning's blinding flare; Then did the thought occur, the crisis was not far.

By prudence moved, but not by fear impelled, After short counsel with himself he'd held, His sails he fixed and tied his tiller fast The storm to face; this done, unto the mast Himself he bound,—then into darkness sailed, As down into a chasm, all bottomless and vast.

Nought could he see but the spray's phosphor spark,—

The lightnings only showed how black the dark. And oh, the roaring rain, the howling blast, The groans and creakings of the spars and mast, The hiss of monsters rising from their caves, The surgings of the seas, the shocks of waves, The shrieking in the air of stricken birds, The awful yelling of the demon squall, The rolls of thunders like God's angry words, Mixed in with crashes like a mountain's fall. Nature, herself, seemed in death's agony, And Chaos, once again, fighting for mastery.

All powers that love to wreck, or overthrow, Seemed now combined to work earth's utter woe. The hosts of Norseland there in rage were massed; Thor's hammer flashing lightnings dire and fast, His chariot wheels loud thundering 'mid the clouds.

His horses' nostrils darting many a blast; And all around, goblins and fiends in crowds, Striving of all God's works to make a ruin vast.

CANTO 3

THE YOUTH'S STRUGGLE WITH THE STORM

But from the Youth no groan had terror won; All brave his heart, as suiting Legion's son. No coward thoughts dared ever venture near, Although a Cæsar would have felt some awe. True, once his mother's voice he seemed to hear, And oft the Maiden's eyes, in tears, he thought he Saw.

But nature made not man invincible, Nor gave him heart of stone, or nerves of steel, (E'en if in war a Legion was a host:) And over him a stupor slow did creep. To keep awake he strove his uttermost, Resisting to the last the spells of sleep. The roaring storm his ears no longer heard, The sting of spray his cheeks no longer felt,

The lightning's flash to him had disappeared;
But as his senses into sleep did melt,
His soul flashed forth like saber from its sheath;
"If I here die," he muttered through his teeth,
"Head up I'll die, fighting while I have breath;
Facing all foes; my flag high in the air,
My eagle spread thereon, and my grand motto—
'Dare!"

As though rejoicing in the anarchy,
The demons of the wind in fiendish glee,
Upon the spars and ropes and tattered sails,
Did play as on harp, making sad wails,
Most direful groans, and horrid shrieks and yells,
As if, released from Heaven's stern decree,
They would reverse all rules of harmony,
And sound amid the storm, a demon's jubilee.

Resolved the little boat wholly to wreck,
Thinking, perchance, it trusted all in charms,
An angry whirlwind threw its giant arms
About its battered form, its maintop broke,
And flag, and sails, and spars, hurled half on deck,
And half upon the waves. The Youth awoke
A moment, in a daze,—as from a blow,
An awful hell of horrid sights and sounds
Confronting him, around, above, below,
As though at last did fall fate's deadly stroke,
And he and boat would perish from their wounds.
A raven croaking in the hurricane
Grimly recalled that ban, invoked at Baldurbane.

With utter darkness everywhere supreme, The mighty world a boundless pit did seem, As wide and deep and dark as Tartarus, Where all gigantic monsters, urged by fate, In one last battle most tumultuous, Each other fought with an infernal hate;-(As when 'gainst Hell fights Hell's gigantic slaves;)

While them, and all things else, the hurricanes, The furious lightnings, and the raging waves, (Though held in limits by eternal chains,) With devilish vengeance would annihilate. At war infernal all the world did seem: But no antagonist had mastership supreme.

Over the Youth a stupor strong did creep; His head dropped down, and nerveless was each limb:

Then with a heavy sigh he lapsed in sleep,-The rope and mast alone supporting him. How came and went his heart-beats and his breath; How long the tempest raged; what bolts of death He there escaped; whither his spirit fled, Or where it lodged while from the flesh aloof; In what dark paths through earth and seas it sped;

What guardian hands protected him from harms; What prayers befriended him,—there is no proof; But somewhere, lodged his soul 'neath heaven's roof,

And somehow, round his form were folded loving arms.

CANTO 4

THE MAID'S DISTRESS IN HER DESERTION

How long in grief there on the ground she lay,—
(Within her soul, and out, such awful gloom;)
And when she left, and how she reached her room,
And what that Angel did to smooth her way,
The Maid knew not,—except as in a dream.
But on the beach she was at dawn of day,
Hoping of him somewhere to get a gleam,
And found the place where he did launch his yacht,
"Oh, God, help Thou, my aching heart!" she
prayed.

"I'm crazed with grief, and what to do know not. Oh, help me God, I pray, a poor forsaken Maid!"

Above the sea the sun's round face did peer,
And in her weeping eyes did grimly stare.
Eastward she sadly gazed in search of him,—
And lo, upon the ocean's utmost rim
A small boat's sails a moment dimly shone,
As in mirage. "He's gone!" she cried; "he's gone!
Oh, he is gone, and left me all alone!"
Upon the shore she sunk as in a swoon;

And far in search of him, her spirit must have flown.

Hours passed; the sky with angry clouds was black,

Gleamed dazzling through the air a lightning flash,—

Then, quick as thought, an awful thunder-crash, Loud as though it the solid earth did crack. The Maid arose, half-dazed, and looked around. Fear nerved her heart and limbs to bear her home, The while the sky in fury grimly frowned, And on the darkened sea, did glare the scattering foam.

Worn with fatigue and misery of soul
Upon her couch she lay,—still in a maze.
"How horrible," she thought, "the thunders' roll!
The lightnings! how they hiss, and flash, and blaze!
And those fierce blasts—how awfully they rant!
Against the rocks I feel the billows beat,
As though they bludgeons have of adamant,
And of this little isle, would make a wreck complete.

"And he upon the sea, in boat so small!
Oh, spare him winds and waves! spare him once
more!

Save him, ye powers divine! he is my all. Oh, bring him once again unto the shore. Save him, ye angels in the skies above! Save him, ye holy saints of Paradise!

And shield him with your wings! My love, my love!

Oh, why should he, so dear, be made a sacrifice?"

Next morn she early rose, and sought the shore. Closely she scanned the waves tumultuous; No sign of life, not e'en a spar or oar. Along the strand she walked where way there was, His lifeless form she almost fain would see,—So great the ache of her anxiety. "Such, such is life!" she mused; "two days ago, (But now how far away they seem to be,) My love I had, with joy my soul did glow; To-day, all gone—all gone! and nothing left but woe.

"My days of bliss at last have come to nought. But life is not eternity; sweet thought!
Though while on earth forbid are we to rise,
The chain that binds us here death soon will break,

And angels wing us, then, to Paradise.

My darling love I'll meet, when up there I awake."

Onward she walked, her heart by sorrow gnawed. Much in her mind his talk 'bout destiny, "It does seem so," she mused; "yet can it be? If fate rules all where then is Heaven's God? Your riddle who can solve, oh mystery? What awful fates our families have faced!

In youth my mother died of broken heart, My father in his height of fame disgraced, Of battle-wounds did Legion's father die, While yet in youth; his mother did depart, E'en in the spring of life, of misery; Legion himself, perchance, dead 'neath the sea. If fate, alas, ruled them, do Thou, O God, rule me."

A daisy growing near she plucked and kissed. "Sweet flower of innocence," she said, as mist Obscured her sight, (because of memory,) "From infancy I've loved thy prettiness. Thou lookest dear to me in my distress. My saintly mother smiled thine eye to see, And made of thee bright garlands for my head. 'In French, daisy is margaret,' she said, 'Emblem of beauty and of innocence'; (Two qualities that never give offense); That 'margaret did also mean a pearl, Emblem of purity,' and, as my name Was Margaret, she prayed that I, her girl, And this sweet snow-white flower, might always mean the same."

As there she stood beside the rolling sea, Oh, what a picture of a saint was she! Of maidenhood the perfect paragon, Faultless in form and feature, full of grace; Love, beauty, innocence and faith, made one,

And pictured all divinely in her face.

Through Heaven's gate she'd passed, without a pause,

Enduring e'en archangel's scrutiny; And one who'd sworn that she an angel was, One of the sisterhood of saints on high, Would no great need have had, his oath to justify.

CANTO 5

THE MAID MUSES ON LEGION'S "CALL"

Days came and went,—Legion her only thought.
Whate'er she saw him to remembrance brought,
The rocks, the waves, the shore, the sky, the sea,
But brought to mind some deed or word of his;
A bird, a cloud, a star, a shell, a tree,
All spoke of him, and started reveries.
He stood for all things, and all stood for him,
And what he'd said or done her heart filled to the
brim.

One day while pondering on what he had said About the duties that called him away, It seemed to her the Youth had been misled, And that false sentiments led him astray. "He said he Legion was, 'type of the world,' That 'due his King and country was his sword,' And he 'must rally where their flag unfurled,'" Said she, as on these words she deeply, sadly pored.

"Alas, that any sword was ever made,
Dagger, or spear, or other deadly blade.
Invented first, no doubt, to slaughter beasts,
Then used 'gainst beastlike men to make defense;
But now 'tween brothers drawn, and holy priests,—

Shedding the sacred blood of innocence,
When sanctioned by the laws of King or State,
In disregard of God's most stern decree;
Thus turning love and joy to war and hate,"
So did she muse in words,—looking across the sea.

"As for the 'King' he is my enemy,
And to my father has injustice done.
Oh, why among mankind should kings there be,
When God made all men equal 'neath the sun?
Kings are no creatures of diviner mold,
Men being clay, and they of finest gold,
And in their breasts no demi-god sojourns.
No 'king' I'll own—unless Legion returns,
Coming for me alone—for my own sake,
The royal crown of perfect love to wear;
Then on my bended knees his hand I'll take,
And to him, as my king, loving allegiance swear.

"His 'country called' he said, and 'forced to go' He was, and bravely 'rally 'round her flag.' What 'country' is that 'calls' I scarcely know; Except as here she did my father drag,

And stripped us of our honors, wealth and joys. So long to me has she her back kept turned I've all forgot her features and her voice:

No land my country is that e'er my father spurned.

"What 'flag' does mean I hardly realize;
No flags I've seen afloat high in the skies;
But flags and creeds, my father says, have made
Those enemies who else would be good friends.
Alas, the schemes shrewd Satan has essayed
To bring to pass his most nefarious ends,
Thus on this earth to keep his kingdom strong,
And 'stead of love put hate upon the throne.
To love's flag only does my heart belong,
And love's the only creed my soul will ever own.

"But fail what will Legion will never fail.

To go, he said, was his fixed destiny,
And go he must: so he away did sail.

To come again is his fixed destiny:
So come he must: that he will come is willed.

This truth I feel deep in my soul,—intense:
Upon this rock of faith my hope I build,
And no black-winged despair shall ever pluck it
thence.

"Eastward he sailed upon the sea away.
Who eastward saileth will return some day:
So saith the proverb, and I feel it true:
(My faith in it doth all my hopes renew.)
Who saileth westward will return no more,

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For never comes the sun from western shore,
While from the east returns he every day:
So from the east Legion will yet return.
This proverb make all true, great God, I pray;
And then, my bliss complete, I nevermore will
yearn."

Just then an eagle, soaring near the sun, Its shadow on her cast: she looked above, And thought, perhaps, by Legion it was done, To let her know his heart did bear her love;— That eagle so like him, all grandly sailing on. •

CHAPTER V

THE YOUTH'S QUEST OF FAME

PROEM

The Youth escapes shipwreck, and reaches the land. Ambition's boundless desert looms before him. Seeking to cross it he encounters many privations and dangers, cheered, however, by occasional glimpses of what he supposed was the Temple of Fame, but which ultimately proved to be mere mirages. He has misgivings that his troubles may be a punishment for his bad faith to Pearl, his betrothed. Foiled at every point, he tries the ways of war, but not succeeding therein, changes to the path of peace. Discomfiture, however, continues to be his fate, despite his valor and persistence. In the meantime, Shonbirg Hall, deserted, falls into dilapidation. These omens discourage the Scribe, when he thinks of Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

THE YOUTH REACHES THE SHORE

High in the morning sky the sun did gleam, When woke the Youth,—as from a nightmare dream,

Still to the mast his body firmly bound.

"Oh, what a dose of Hell I had last night!

Such sights and sounds a devil would confound."

He muttered with a sigh,—in woful plight,

As near at hand appeared a level shore,

"No sinner dead and damned could suffer more,

How much was real, how much did only seem,

Perhaps I'll never know, so like were fact and dream.

"Surely for me there's nothing worse in store.
But what am I to do? lashed hard and fast;
Too weak the knots to loose, my throat all dry,
My heart and veins athirst. Here must I die,
Self-crucified, bound to this broken mast?
No, no! some whence will come deliverance,
And rescued somehow will I be, at last.
Never will fate a Legion thus undo!
The curse of Baldurbane gives better chance!"
This thought more pleasant prospects brought to
view,

His spirit flamed at once, and hope did blaze anew.

Near loomed the land, and fair appeared the shore, Some sailors came, and did his yacht demand; Before his eyes they plundered all her store, Unbound him from the mast, and left him on the strand.

Up straightening his form, he from his face
His tangled hair pushed back, and looked about;
Nought did he see but desert land, and drought.
"What's chanced is not defeat, nor yet disgrace,"
He said, "My course shall onward be,—and straight.

Despair I never will, whate'er betide,
Until is closed and sealed the book of fate."
Within his eyes did shine the glow of pride,
And throned upon his brow, a high resolve did
bide.

"Our troubles flee if on them we advance; Ghosts turn to nought when we upon them rush, Who uses judgment little leaves to chance, He best succeeds who ever on doth push, Ships face the wind that safely ride the storm, And he most crowns will win, who nobly doth perform."

With musings such as these he journeyed on, His face all firmly set towards the sun. Before him far ambition's desert spread; Loud boomed along the sands a lion's roar; Ravens, buzzards and daws sailed overhead;
But on he went, his feet though somewhat sore.
At last, behind some clouds far in the west
The sun went slowly down;—and tired he sought
for rest.

Among some shrubs he shrunk, and tried to sleep; But dogs and wolves drove slumber from his eyes, On every hand vile reptiles near did creep, And harsh did sound the jackals' fiendlike cries, While through the livelong night hyenas howled, And all around his bed, obnoxious vermin prowled.

CANTO 2

THE DESERT OF AMBITION

With morn's first beams he rose. Their rocky lairs

The wild beasts sought, their roosts the birds of night.

On straight he went, avoiding pits and snares, Doing his best to keep his goal in sight. One time he thought he saw fame's golden dome, High in the gleaming dawn all grandly loom. While far up high did soar his eagle bright. About his path lay many skeletons;—Perhaps, the slighted bones of bright ambition's

sons.

When lengthening shades the sunset did suggest
His steps he stayed, and turned towards the west.
"I must about," he said, "I'm going wrong.
Yonder's the dome of fame; the spires I see.
The course is plain; the road cannot be long,
And from all obstacles appeareth free."
Delight exultant danced upon his face,
And in his heart bright hopes came up apace.
In golden gorgeousness the sun sunk down,
While through the sky loomed all the western
crags,

Like towers of gold, and high above, a crown;
And all the sky was filled with streaming flags.
Joy filled his soul when this grand sight he saw,
"Fame's temple bright!" he cried; "hurra! hurra,
hurra!"

Brief was his bliss; gone was the sun's last glance.
Up loomed the gloomy visage of the night,
(Like some gigantic demon's countenance,)
And half the world was filled with gloom and fright.

"'Twas but the sunshine on those lofty crags,"
With sighs he said. Hunger and thirst returned.
What once were shining mists now seemed black
hags

Who 'mid the shades of night, in secrecy sojourned.

At earliest dawn the Youth was on his feet, Resolved no time to lose in idleness;

But where the sun arose there seemed the seat Of all there was to glorify, or bless; So, to the east again his face he turned, And sorrow felt that it he'd ever spurned. Onward he sped across the shadeless plain; Upon his head the sun shone fiercely down, But on he went regardless of the pain; Often he passed a faded laurel crown, While all around were human skulls and bones, Mixed in with broken swords, and half-demolished thrones.

While wandering far in earnest search of fame, 'Mong tribes of warring men at length he came; A neutral road he took, in part concealed, That he unharmed might through their country go. This neutral road he found their battle-field,-Himself by all believed to be a secret foe.

One side wore feathers black, the other blue, Their cause of quarrel but a mere mirage, Their prize a sandy waste where nothing grew, Where no good fowls could live, nor good beasts lodge.

No feather wore the Youth, and neither clan Did he uphold, but counseled compromise. They sneered and mocked at all his homilies; His life to take both sides at once did plan: By night he fled away,—a more sagacious man! Now did the Scribe begin to realize
That he somehow might Legion's shadow be;
And looking through the mystical disguise,
Many resemblances did plainly see.
Then did he hope that Yndafrene, in ruth,
Might have for him such love as Margie bore the
Youth.

CANTO 3

THE YOUTH TAKES PART IN A DEBATE

Aside he turned where men in tumult were.

He heard the strife; debate was everywhere.

A part he took, and fiercer grew the fight.

"Hurra! a champion!" his party cried;

"Impartial is his mind, and we are right,"

"Impostor!" cried his foes; and did deride.

Seized was the Youth, at once. "A rope! a rope!"

His captors screamed, while they his body beat.

In prison was he thrust, and chained his feet.

There days he lay without a ray of hope,

Darksome and damp his cell, and nought to drink

or eat.

But while in dungeon thus alone confined, No coward thoughts dared come into his mind, No moaning sounds escaped his close-pressed lips, No dark despairs his spirit did eclipse, Out with his breath there came no mournful sighs, No tear-drops shone upon his cheeks or eyes; But ever was his heart in brave control, And e'er a Legion he, unconquered in his soul.

His crime none knew; his guard, perplexed, did fear

His cell to ope, the judge his plea to hear. And why? Because he was all innocent! His foes into a secret caucus went. "If tried," they said, "all men will cry us down; For they will say, 'instead of chains a crown This man should have'; and make us pay most dear.

The longer, then, in chains we keep him here, The longer no injustice will appear, And of all accusation we'll be rid"; (For just they seem to be, who keep injustice hid).

While with the Maid upon the ocean isle, One hair of hers, so silken, fine and fair, Blew from her head one day across his face. He picked it off, and with a happy smile, For it within his locket found a place. A woman's hair, fragile and light as air, More strong a man to draw, when love doth aid, Than bands or cordage strong, or chains of iron made.

His only solace now that little hair;
And in that prison foul he would have died,
But for the magic virtue it supplied.
The Maid it seemed to keep forever near.
By day, her eyes so sweet, her face so fair,
So full of tenderness, seemed oft in sight;
Within her loving arms he seemed at night,
And felt her cheek press softly 'gainst his own.
That Angel was at hand, the Youth was not alone.

That hair charmed into light the dungeon's shade,
And of that prison-hell a Heaven made,
Making a captive feel like glory's heir.
How strange the power of a maiden's hair,
When hallowed by love's holy memories!
What happy thoughts and visions it doth hold.
As alchemy turns metals base to gold
So it turns dregs of woe into a bliss
As sweet and bright and pure, as aught in Paradise.

Yet oft, when in his prison dark and vile, He'd trace his life far back from memory's dawn, Down to his shipwreck on that rocky isle, Nought did he find so sweet to linger on As that dear girl's fair face and happy smile Which on his boyhood's life so brightly shone; It seemed a spell to cast upon his heart That made his life, of hers, somehow to be a part; And when his wrist he'd bare there were the scars, By that dog's vicious tushes plainly made, Which kept in mind, better than calendars The time when they as man and wife had played. Then would he think a grievous wrong he'd done To her who had his boyhood's heart then won; And fear he would, the troubles that befell Were punishment that he might merit well For that 'gainst his betrothed he did in heart rebel.

One night his door they oped, his chains took off, And bade him leave, and from their country stay. While glad, his rivals frowned, and much did scoff, Called him a coward thus to flee away, At dead of night;—but no reward would give For news of his retreat,—and raised the jailer's pay!

Though out of jail, the Youth no fugitive:
When he his prison left he ran no race,
But walked off calmly, at his usual pace,
Feeling like one who outrage had received;
And as he went his mind he thus relieved:
"All things I've suffered now; that ocean death,
The fury of the storm-fiend's fearful wrath,
Pains of a broken heart, distress of thirst,
And famine's agony; but this by far's the worst!

"Think of a Legion, heir to Shonbirg Hall,
Thrust down a dungeon like a thieving thrall!
Think of a Legion cuffed and buffeted
Upon the body, breast and even head,
By creatures vile;—indeed in human shape,
But in real goodness not above the ape;—
He bound, unarmed, with nought to make defense.
Yes, yes; all thing I've suffered now, and hence,
I'm all the readier my task to brave,
And win a golden crown, or else a gory grave."

CANTO 4

THE PATH OF WAR, AND THE PATH OF PEACE

At liberty in Heaven's light and air,
Recovered from his wounds and prison-fare,
A city large, at last, the Youth received.
As great the multitudes did him acclaim,
And soon some public honor he achieved:
Then thought he, "Really won at last is fame,
And soon upon my head her laurel band."
But lo, change turned a leaf, and waved her wand,
Casting her mighty spell on all the world;
With bribery charged, and treason to the State,
The Youth 'mid hoots was from his office hurled,—
In truth his only crime, with thieves he would not
mate!

Firmly resolved never a jot to yield, But keep defiant in fame's battle-field, His hope still beaming and his faith still bold, To air-line routes that brought to plainest view Fame's temple grand with dome of shining gold, But had delusive proved, he bade adieu; And sought the longer routes, trod since the days of old.

Two ancient roads there were; beginning low, But ever growing higher, until at last They reached the sky. No one at first did know Those entering, but as ahead they passed They came to view, and never ceased to grow, Until like mighty giants some did loom, Rising still higher when they slew a foe; Each hero's glory based upon some hero's tomb.

Around were murdered men and murderers, And men with wounds that crippled them for life; Some wounds were only those on characters, While others were results of bloody strife. In darkened dens sat hoary Ignorance, And Prejudice her son, with poisoned darts. There, robed like Truth, among the disputants, Sat Calumny, plying her crafty arts, Within her mouth hiding her serpent-tongue, That men might not detect her character. Thousands by her false words to death were stung, And few got wholly well, when once assailed by her.

There low-browed Treachery his knife concealed; While Envy, sallow-eyed, in sneering moods, Spoke out, but stabbed in secret multitudes, Whose cause of downfall never was revealed. Alert Suspicion, whose eyes magnified, Assisted all who sought one's overthrow; And black-faced Hate, whose malice was her guide, There never missed a chance, to strike a deadly blow.

These two pathways, unto the gaze of men,
Showed all Fame's followers; and witnesses
Hooted or cheered, as were their sympathies;
Some loudly praised the sword, and some the pen;
Some favored deeds of peace, some deeds of war,
Some cheered the soldier, some the orator;
But few admired the man who helped mankind,
And fewer still blessed those, who strove to heal
the blind.

Surrounded by a gaping multitude,
(The poor on foot, the rich on prancing steeds),
A stately arch high o'er each entry stood,
Adorned with gilt, and colors flaming bright,
And gaudy pictures of heroic deeds,
Emotions of ambition to excite;
(Much as a circus doth its shows display
To charm the inquisitive, and fascinate the gay.)

At one arch Peace, in snowy robes arrayed, A crown of olive leaves upon her head; Close by her side great stores of fruits and bread, Within her hands parchments and pens displayed, And at her feet the chronicles of love; Her flower the lily white, her bird the turtle dove.

High o'er the other arch, resplendent shone, Gigantic and sublime, of perfect mold, The god of War, in mail of glittering gold. Beneath his feet did gleam an ivory throne, Which many crowns of laurel bright did hold; And round about were emperors and kings. His helm and shield of mighty battles told; Instead of plume an eagle with spread wings. His sword and spear their dazzling steel displayed, And pawing at his side, a mighty war-horse neighed.

His sword the Youth straight drew and joined the fray,

Battling for glory, country and his King. Long, long he fought, and often gained the day; And high and wide he heard the plaudits ring, While 'bove the clouds his eagle winged its way. Now near ahead seemed fame's bright dome of gold,

Where hope did say he would his crown behold, And with fame's mighty sons, forever be enrolled. An awful battle-scene glared on the Wreath:
Above it loomed that black-faced angel Death;
And fighting like fierce fiends of Hell beneath
Were creatures made of nought but clay and
breath:—

Brothers they all, and yet they thought it not: Their only difference all worthless when forgot.

CANTO 5

SHONBIRG HALL IN DESOLATION

Meanwhile all desolate was Shonbirg Hall,
Untenanted e'en by an humble thrall.
Its grounds once on a time so very fair
With flowers all bright, and smooth walks everywhere;

Its shrubs, and vines and trees, once neatly lopped, Its lawns once mown, its hedges once well topped, Were now of briers and trees a tangled mass, Mixed in with shrubs and vines and coarsest grass. The walks that once did tempt the tender feet Of maidens delicate, and children neat, So overgrown now were, not stalwart men could pass.

Down were all gates, and down was every fence; Outlying cabins had to ruin gone; Even some statues of the holy saints Lay prostrate 'neath rank growths upon the lawn, Places where happy children once had played,
Arbors and seats where lover sat with maid;
And every sign that graf had there a home
Now only showed that he away did roam,
And none did leave on guard, till he again should
come.

When evening came the bats flew from their lair; At night weird owls loud hooted everywhere, As though to Shonbirg Hall no other heir; And night and day, wherever one did look, He saw a raven perched, or heard its croak; Indeed, that seemed to be their chief abode, As though confirmed to them, by some infernal god.

There lived the Legions once, in princely state, In all the land no name esteemed more great,— Except the King's. None envied them their fate; And they, from pride and envy wholly free, Awoke in others nought of jealousy. Unto their King and country ever true, With right and honor ever plain in view, Beloved were they by all, and lauded high, And all, their names and deeds, in love did glorify.

But yet, alas, brief was each Legion's reign, (Though while each lived none greater was than he,)

Not one escaped that ban of Baldurbane,

Or from a croaking raven e'er was free.
In valor ever foremost 'mong the brave;
In war their swords would each a thousand slay;
Nor mightier on the field than on the wave,
Where'er they fought they hewed a bloody way,
And thrice in battles did the King and Kingdom
save.

But Legion, the young heir, and only one, (His sire long dead, leaving no other son,) Away in distant lands had long been gone, Whither and why, and what had been his fate, Whether alive, or numbered with the slain, The villagers had ceased to speculate, So fatal was that ban of bloody Baldurbane.

The story once had been low whispered round
That while a boy, by strong betrothment chain,
He by his father had been firmly bound
To wed, when grown, the daughter of the Dane.
But she away had with her father gone,
And when and whither could be told by none.
So went the Youth, with love his only torch,
Firmly resolved the whole wide world to search
Till her he'd found, wherever she might stay,
And claim her for his bride, whoever might say
nay.

But others said that he for love cared not, That love ne'er mastered so a Legion's thought; But he had gone, all Legion-like so brave, Led by that mighty spell which was his lot, To win renown ere would be made his grave. Yet many thought some day he'd come again, After great miracles he had achieved; (From every evil spell and curse relieved;) And there in Shonbirg Hall, made new, would reign,

With her his darling bride, the daughter of the Dane.

Reading how desolate was Shonbirg Hall, Because its owners young in battle killed, All vividly the Scribe did here recall His father's homestead, wasted and untilled, Because war's hand had swept both fence and field; And feared he Yndafrene with black his fate had sealed.



CHAPTER VI

THE FORSAKEN MAIDEN

PROEM

Questioned by her Sire about her sadness the Maid confesses; and it turns out that the hero who rescued the Youth's father at Wodenow was none other than Strombold himself, who is greatly excited at the Maid's revelation. For fear of increasing her grief he conceals from her the fact that she is the Youth's betrothed. Then is described the lone, sad vigils of the Maid upon the cliff, that Angel and dove consoling her. A second Chasm in the Wreath here appears, beyond which is joy;—but the Scribe is still in gloom about Yndafrene.

MARCHARO.

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CANTO 1

THE MAID CONFESSES TO HER FATHER

STROMBOLD, her sire, upon his work intent,
The secret powers of nature to unfold,
Involving then a prime experiment,
Was so absorbed his mind could nought else hold,
And in his sanctum lived he day and night,
While his sad daughter was but seldom in his
sight.

Chancing one day to see her sad of face,
He made inquiry 'bout her misery.
Then did the Maid her father's knees embrace,
And weeping made confession full and free,
E'en from the moment first the Youth she spied
Down to the time his boat she last descried
Sailing swiftly away, upon the eastern sea.

Surprised, the Sire his full attention lent,
As she her tragic drama did relate.
Some time he pondered on the strange event,
And what was hidden in the hand of fate,
Which had to him of late no mercy dealt.
Then in deep pity gave his verdict mild:
"You've nothing done that's wrong. At first I
felt

A glow of wrath,—at him, no, not at you, my child.

"And when the facts I do consider well,
Recalling that no confident you have,
No mother whom your secrets you might tell,
Myself aloof from thee, hid in my cave;
Considering how secret love e'er is,
Its many fascinating mysteries,
Discreet, indeed, has been your every act,
And nought I see wherein you good discretion
lacked."

"But, father, blame not him," implored the Maid.

"Twas not his fault that on our island shore,
A shipwrecked Youth he by that storm was laid,
And found by me in swoon at death's own door.

What could I do but try his life to save?

And what could he but take the food and drink I
gave?

"And now as all his conduct I do scan,
His every word was perfect courtesy,
His every act proved him a gentleman,
His clothing proved he was of high degree,
His every look showed loftiness of mind.
How sweetly of his mother he did speak,
While tears for her did fall upon his cheek;
Sure, father, never man so good and kind,
So pure of heart and soul, so grand in name.
And having in his veins a hero's blood,
What could he do but glory seek, and fame,
Far from this little isle, across the ocean's flood?"

Greatly excited by her narrative, "A hero's son, you say?" he did inquire; "What hero? tell me more: his history give; Great must he be since him you so admire." Then told she that a Legion was this Youth, Whose ancestors on many fields had fought, And how while battling for the King his sire Was wounded almost unto death, forsooth; But a heroic friend, 'mid dangers dire, Did rescue him, and back his body brought, The might of many swords bravely setting at nought.

She told how of his wounds his sire had died, By King and country greatly glorified; How his dear mother pined her life away, And he an orphan left to make his way; And how himself to prove worthy his name The Youth did long himself, to win a crown of fame.

Amazed at what his daughter did relate, Strombold arose, and gesturing walked about, As though within his heart he did debate. "My comrade's son," he cried, "without a doubt. No other Legion ever lived so great, In all the world: perfect 'fore man and God! In time of peace no woman's love more sweet; But on the battle-field where foemen trod, No hero-fiend of Hell could ever be his mate.

"Oh, 'twas a sight a devil to astound,
The day I rescued him. In heaps around
Lay those he'd slain, with none to take his part,
Or to his friends to be a messenger.
The Knights of old, Roland and Oliver,
Baldwin and Guy, Godfrey and Lion-heart,
That Spanish hero, Cid Campeador,
And Samson's self who knocked his thousands
down,

Have duplicates in valor and renown;
But nowhere lives brave Legion's duplicate,—
Unless a worthy son his soul doth animate."

"Why, father, you are wild! how you do rave!
That you're the friend who from the battle-field
Brave Legion bore, when he refused to yield;
Nursed him till dead, then laid him in his grave?"
Excitedly she asked, grasping his sleeve,
And looking eagerly into his face.
"My child, I am, I do indeed believe.
Ne'er strikes the lightning twice, in the same lofty place.

"What more said he about his father's friend?" Inquired the Sire, her story to extend. "No more, but somehow in his narrative He to that friend such honor seemed to give, I thought thereof I'd some inquiry make;

But on he talked,—and I was scarce awake:
My mind seemed in some higher state to live;
And what he told and did, but visions seem to
make."

"You cared for him,—but did he care for you? Did aught he say or do just for love's sake?"
"Oh, father, not for certainty I know; And sure, sometimes, my heart I fear will break, So agonizing is my dire distress, Because I know it not; but oh, his look, His voice, his sigh, his smile; his gentleness, The tender interest in me he took, Spelled love unto my heart like letters in a book.

"Yet though for just one word my soul did ache No syllable of love to me he spake, Nor ever touched my hand but in adieu, (As though afraid his touch might me attaint;) He seemed to think I was too like a saint For any human love to covet, or to woo.

"Fame, he complained, called him from here away, And bound he felt to hearken to her call."

"Like Legion's talk sounds that," exclaimed the Sire.

"Of a return what did he ever say?" All eagerly her father did inquire.

"Never a word or hint did he let fall; But that he will deep in my heart I feel." Then at her father's feet she low did kneel, And long did moan and weep, all inconsolable.

CANTO 2

STROMBOLD TELLS OF THE YOUTH'S SIRE

All in a raging tumult Strombold's mind:
Came rushing in a flood of memories
Of mighty days, long since all left behind,—
When joined were his and Legion's destinies.
Then, too, came thoughts red-hot with present force

'Bout what the Maid had just to him confessed, And how events thenceforth might shape their course,

And whether what had happed, might not be for the best.

"Oh, Legion, comrade dearest to my soul,"
He said aloud, though no one near to hear;
"No grander hero on fame's honor scroll,
No truer friend in friendship's holy sphere.
Never such deeds in war by man performed,
Never such valor on the earth was seen
Since first to battle men like demons swarmed,
As when great Legion fought, so godlike was his
mien.

"Had one been sought to do some wondrous deed That on this earth had had no parallel, Calling for hero great and stalwart steed, Such as to storm the Paynim's citadel, To slay a host with but a single lance, To seize and plunder rich Byzantium, To conquer all alone the King of France, To scatter wide the foes of christendom, Or do some other deed ne'er done before, By skill, courage, or strength, upon a field of war;—

"Had man been sought such deeds as these to do, (Which could, perchance, be done by none, or few,) Of all on earth who'd been of woman born, And in these days did on the earth sojourn, All eyes and thoughts to Legion would have gone, As the one man who victory could have won, For surely he, alone, was mankind's champion."

Then to the present he his mind did give,
Then in the future for a while did live,
Wondering what these new haps, so strange, forecast,

And if a better day, for him might break, at last.

"Love her he does, I'm sure;" so thought the Sire. "Her grace and beauty can but love inspire. But thinking her for life condemned to live Upon this little isle, her Sire disgraced,

And banished here,—almost a fugitive,
This Youth, all Legion-like, could not afford
With my dear child to wed, and be debased;
Both by the King and court wholly ignored.
Then where the Legion-name? where then the
Legion-sword?

"No doubt the force of love he fully felt,
And knew 'twould grow the longer here he dwelt;
But Youth of honor, with his race to run,
And not content till glory he had won,
His love he throttled for the sake of both,
(Although no doubt he was extremely loth;)
And to the world went back to fight for fame.
Oh, Legion, Legion, how like thee thy son!
As like in chivalry, as he is like in name!

"Betrothed, besides, is he unto my child;
But having reverence for his father's act,
And not knowing my child was in the pact,
Perhaps he from her side himself exiled
That honor thus might be all reconciled.
But all of this from her I'll secret keep,—
To know it would but make her grief more keen
and deep.

"But if he lives return some day he will: The charm of love is irresistible, And back some day he'll sail to Redenfayn. We'll all be happy yet! I feel the fate His coming back will sure predestinate. And then that mother's ban at Baldurbane Be by some mightier charm made all in vain." He paused in thought; the proverb came to view; "Who saileth eastward goes for brief sojourn; Who saileth westward bids a last adjeu. Legion to eastward sailed, and surely he'll return."

His absence bore she uncomplainingly, Nor censure cast by thought, nor word, nor deed, So perfect to her eyes and heart was he. No wrong she saw in aught he said or did; 'Twas fate that dragged him off, and destiny That from her side kept him across the sea; For he a Legion was, and certified For glory and for fame; but some bright day Return he surely would, and claim her for his bride.

When this he read the Scribe gave forth a groan, That like a heart-burst made his frame to quake; So like his own the grief the Leaves had shown ;-Nor knew he what to do for Yndafrene's dear sake.

CANTO 3

THE MAID DISCONSOLATE

When out of Eden forced, Adam and Eve Did nothing bear away, but love and grief,—
The two, at once, a burden and relief:
So love and grief their steps so interweave,
That they who love the most, the most must sigh and grieve.

Days, weeks and months the sorrowing Maid did pine,

Disconsolate. Nought brought forgetfulness,
And respite never came,—nor anodyne;—
Nor any solace for her deep distress.
Like setting sun upon a cloudy day,
Hope low was sinking in despair's dark sea.
Weak were her wings of thought,—none upward soared.

What little joy her fleeting dreams did bear Like Hebrew babes, met sudden massacre By grim reality's bloody Herodian sword.

Forever broken seemed her golden bowl, And spilled the sweet wine of felicity; Crushed seemed the flowers that blossomed in her soul,

And gone her favorite star from out the sky; Her harp when struck but uttered wails and sighs. Gone from its cage the pet bird most she loved: Its cheery voice so sweet, its gentle eyes So full of love,—all gone, and far away had roved.

Thus from her heart her sad lament did rise, As though from angel banished from the skies, Or from that Peri forced from Paradise. So did the Scribe translate the lettered *Leaves*, Unless some subtle spell his grieving soul deceives.

THE MAIDEN'S PLAINT

"Alone Gloom's Land my spirit walks, No light upon my path; No words I hear but sorrow's talks Here joy no errand hath.

"Dark clouds are ever in my sky,
No sounds but groans I hear;
No pleasant sights to charm my eye,
No bliss my soul to cheer.

"Beside my path no flowers bloom,
No prattling rills do flow;
My spirit seems beneath some doom,
And destiny my foe.

"No birds I see in tree or sky, But ravens, owls and crows; No thing my heart to gratify, No plant with beauty glows. "My only love away has gone,
And with him all delight;
Nought can I do but weep and moan,
My Legion from my sight.

"So must I walk the Land of Gloom,
Among its funeral urns:
And death from grief must be my doom,
Unless my love returns.

"Oh, God, have pity on my woe,
My Legion's heart entreat;
Make him my anguish all to know,
And hither turn his feet."

Thus having said some peace her spirit felt, As though a loving angel hovered near, Or some sweet charm of sympathy there dwelt, Known to the soul but hid from eye and ear. In sooth, that Guardian Angel was not far, Nor did in aught her interest abate. The white sea dove then cooed oracular: So did the Scribe the lettered Leaves translate; And while he read, the thought did oft arise Whether the heart of Yndafrene, the fair, Did e'er remember him with loving sighs; Or whether he was doomed to die in drear despair.

CANTO 4

WOMAN'S LOVE

Suns rise and set; planets in orbits vast Revolve; moons wax and wane; tides ebb and flow:

Change do the seasons; come the years,—and go; And nations rise and fall. Nothing doth last. On every thing Change writes her potent name: 'Tis all the same with peasant and with king. E'en time itself is always on the wing, And nought in all the world two moments is the same:--

But love; for love that's true doth never wane; Once in the soul there it abides for aye, Unmoved by time, and altered not by pain. No mine on earth, no grotto in the sea, No star in heaven, no great king's treasury, A gem contains, so pure and rich and fair As a good woman's love,-priceless beyond compare!

Eternal is love's fire. The sacred flame Of Rome, by vestal virgins kept, is out; The holy blaze, for Montezuma's name Preserved by Aztec priests, is all forgot, Nor e'en in caves is nursed its mystic light; The heaven-born fire of Ormuzd, that so bright In ancient Iran burned, no longer lives;

The peak of Teneriffe, lit by God's hand To light the ocean wide, no glimmer gives; And so have died all fires, e'er lit on sea or land.

But love's all hallowed fire, when once supreme In woman's heart, as on an altar bright, Doth never die, so ceaselessly its flame Her constant spirit feeds both day and night; While ever she her lover doth adore. That fire lives while she lives, and when she dies Her path it lights to home beyond the skies, And blazes there in beauty evermore; For love's eternal home is on the other shore.

'Tis said a lover's love his absence kills,
As blooms are killed by absence of the rain;
But when true love a woman's heart once fills,
Its roots so through her soul do penetrate,
And bind so firmly as with golden chain,
That come what may of fortune or of fate,
Be skies all bright, or ever overcast,
Come friends in multitudes or foes in shoals,
Ring bells of merriment or funeral tolls,
Blow zephyrs sweet or howl the bitter blast,
Come weal or woe, howe'er the time may fly,
Be loved one false, or in the graveyard lie,
Her love will ever live, and never wholly die.

Remain some little root or tendril will The heart to waken, or the soul to thrill,— In dreams, if not awake: some sound, some sight, Some little trifle, or some token slight, Some little bliss that time can never kill. A leaf, a bird, a flower, a loving look, A song, a path, a tree, a ring, a book, Will work like magic on the love within, And rouse it up all fresh and strong again,-And then that heart will sigh, that soul feel pain, A-thinking of those things that were, or might have been.

Thus would loom up in Margie's memory, (Like lovely lands in desert mirage seen,) Thoughts of that city park and day of glee, When "Many" reigned and she as "Pearl" was queen;

And of their vows that man and wife they'd be When they were grown, and nought should intervene:

Nor could she solve the riddle these things made, But that they'd work out well with sighs she hoped and prayed,-

Thinking how sweet 'twould be, if at the end He and Legion should in one person blend; Those locket portraits once by Legion shown As much like Many's parents as his own.

Besides, by chance, on Legion's wrist she saw Some scars the shape of that vile mongrel's jaw; And as she pondered deeply on the two Strong points of likeness seemed, all plain to come to view.

And when at times she'd think, as think she would, That if Legion did lie beneath the flood, Some solace it would be if "Many" lived. "Of him," said she, "I may not be deprived; And if Legion be in his sepulcher May 'Many' live to be my comforter. For ne'er before, since men on earth were made, Have two there been with faces so alike: One of the other surely is the shade, But which the substance is no one could ever pick.

"How it may be I cannot all divine,
For every day unto my spirit's eyes
More and more like to only one they shine,—
Although that one may be in different guise."
When thus she'd think or speak, always to view
That white sea dove would come, and softly coc:
All this, the Leaves did say, was to that Angel due.

Unto the Scribe a portrait here did rise, Showing the Maid, with great tears in her eyes, And on her face a look of deep distress. Then did he hope the heart of Yndafrene, Musing of him might feel some heaviness, And softly sigh to think how many miles between.

CANTO 5

THE CLIFF OF VIGILS SAD

Why were the song birds hushed on Redenfayn? Why ceased the curlew's call unto its mate? Why did the squirrels in their holes remain? Why looked the ocean shells disconsolate? Why hung the flowers their heads so sad and low? Alas, a thing of grief their mistress now, Her eyes all blinded by the burning tears of woe.

But one bird faithful was,—a white sea dove,
She once found stranded on the ocean shore,
And nursed till strong. Away it ne'er did rove,
But seemed its mistress ever to adore,
And always to her came when she did call,
And softly cooed, as though for very love:
Little the Maid did think it was that Angel's
thrall.

Seeking the sea to view from greatest height,
Upon the cliff where they had sat, that night,
(While fondest love both hearts did all suffuse,
Gazing in silence on the sea and sky;—)
And where so much loved he to sit and muse,
Thinking of her and his ambition high,—
While near the sun soared his bright eagle plain,—
There every day with heavy heart sat she,
Looking through tears afar upon the sea

The way he sailed across the mighty main,— Praying for his return right there and then, Never from her away to wander forth again.

Hallowed that cliff seemed in her loving eyes, Above the earth and near unto the skies. There on her right sat Hope, close by her side, Like angel fair, and free from every guile. Eyes blue and bright, and always open wide; Soft, sweet and low her voice; loving her smile: Her words the Maiden's heart oft pacified, And to her joyless life, her soul did reconcile.

But never even in her deepest grief,
Those words of comfort did the Maid forget.
(Words by that Angel breathed for her relief,
And written on her memory's amulet,)
"Who saileth eastward, some day will return,
Who saileth westward bids a last adieu;
Who saileth eastward, goes for brief sojourn,
Who saileth westward, nevermore you'll view.
"Legion to eastward sailed: he will," thought she,
"return."

Thus spent the Maid her days upon the cliff, Her company, hope, memory and grief, Her only task alone to watch and wait: Her heart a shrine in which an altar stood,—Her holy place to him all consecrate. Above this altar shone his image bright,

Her spirit there in perfect sanctitude,—
Shining as fair as angel of the light.
All else forgot: thus she nepenthe found.
Her idol 'twas, with flowers of love wreathed round,

By her sad eyes with many tears bedewed, And by her sighs perfumed. As on her knees In adoration there her lonely days She spent, and thus her heart found partial ease, The only solace sweet, for her soul's miseries.

Oft did she dream she saw him sailing back
Wearing upon his head a golden crown;
The waters shone like rainbows in his track
And loud a trumpet sounded his renown.
Once did she dream he landed near her seat,
And begged her fly with him across the sea.
But thoughts of her dear father chained her feet;
And while considering her lover's plea
From sleep she slowly woke, filled with emotions sweet.

Of hope or truth the Laurel Leaves said nought, Nought of that Angel, nor that white sea dove; And what of these is in this story wrought, The Scribe out of the Leaves of Myrtle wove,—Inmixed with what his memory held most like. The last lines of the Laurel Leaves portrayed

The demon of despair about to strike His poisonous claws into the weeping Maid, Her spirit tottering near the precipice Below which yawned, so dire, that horrible Abyss.

A SECOND CHASM IN THE WREATH

A chasm's reached: beyond oh, seek it all.

Why linger longer here, ambition's thrall?

This side is sin, beyond is righteousness;

Here live the men who curse, there those who bless;

Here croaks the raven, there soft cooes the dove;

Here sways hate's spell, but there the charm of love;

Here reigns self-worship, there self-sacrifice; Here gilded misery, there perfect bliss; Here Pandemonium, there ever Paradise.

Repentance is the bridge this chasm spans,—
A bridge all free from pitfalls, bars and bans;
And while, like Al Sirat, it threats to fall,
Him will it bear unto the other shore,
Who hates the sins he's done, confesses all,
The ruin by him wrought doth all deplore;
His faults regrets, all damages repairs,
And pardon begs, his heart in grief, his eyes in tears.

But no weak soul can cross that dire abyss; Courage it takes over that bridge to go, A contrite heart backed up by sturdiness: The entrance narrow, and the progress slow, And awful yawn the darksome deeps below. Often the bridge by strong obstructions barred, While Pride in armor clad stands ever as its guard.

Cross, cross, all ye who seek a Gilead;
There is the land that makes the contrite glad;
There o'er one's head hangs neither ban nor blade;
There grows the balm, and the physician's there.
Here Hell's black banner casts o'er all a shade;
But Heaven's white flag shines bright, in yonder azure air.

Glad was the Scribe the Laurel Leaves did end,
For nought of comfort gave they to his soul,
Dark were their words, darker the scenes he
kenned;

Peace, love and joy drank from a bitter bowl, And much he feared ill luck for him they did portend,

Since Yndafrene to him no word nor line did send.

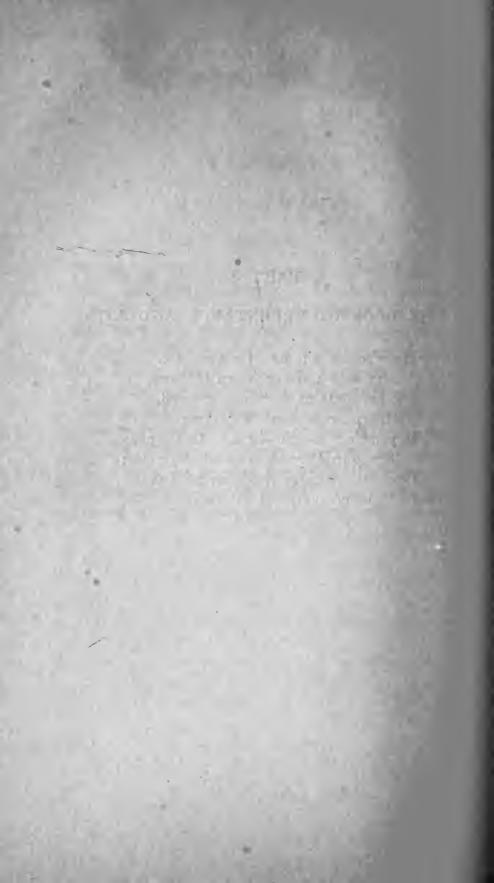
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PART 3

THE BOOK OF REPENTANCE AND JOYS

He who by sin has Heaven lost,
And sees a chasm yawn between,
Let him bethink it can be crossed,
If true repentance intervene.
Repentance is the bridge that spans
The gap between us and the skies;
Upon that bridge there are no bans,
And once across is Paradise.

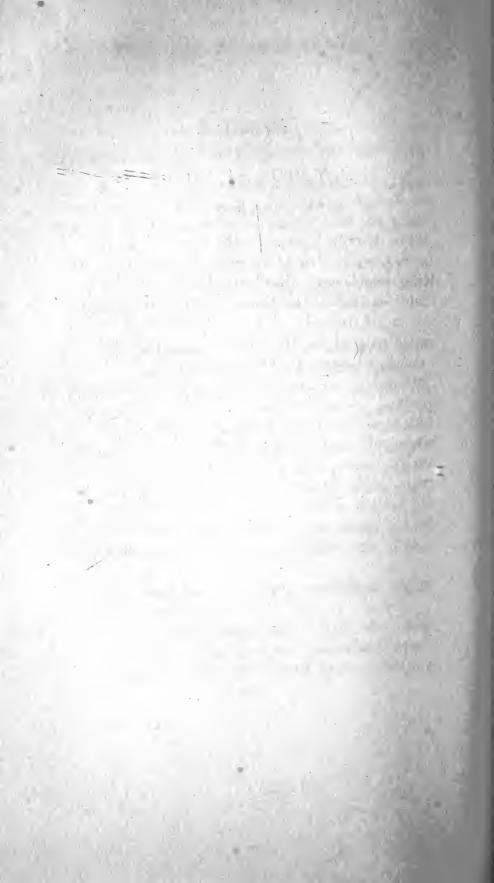


CHAPTER I

JOY BEGINS TO DAWN

PROEM

The Scribe peruses the remaining Myrtle Leaves, which tell of repentance and joys. The King and Queen talk about the sires of the Maid and Youth, and the King admits that Strombold was unjustly exiled, but is informed that both he and his daughter are dead. Legion, gashed with wounds, is nursed by Father John, who had nursed his father. The priest exorcises the ban of Baldurbane. He tells the youth about Strombold; and, then, the Youth first learns that the Maid is his betrothed; thereupon, he sends her a letter telling of his love. This letter she receives and answers. The Scribe becomes more hopeful that he will yet win Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

THE REMAINING MYRTLE LEAVES PERUSED

ABRUPTLY had the Leaves of Laurel closed, As though on Mars no more the skald composed. Then did the Scribe recall that on the Wreath Were Myrtle Leaves he did not all inspect,—Leaves on a branch the Laurel stump beneath,—(On Venus writ, that orb of love's elect;) And greatly did he grieve, because of his neglect.

Afar from social life and business feuds,
One day reclining on an ocean beach,
(Where in the summer throng the multitudes,)
Looking seaward far as his sight could reach,
His fancy all unchained and far afloat,
Thoughts came to him of Margie, on her cliff,
Gazing across the sea for Legion's boat:
Deep in his soul he greatly wondered if
Legion returned, and what their after-life,
What did become of Strombold, and his isle,
And if unto the end, prevailed his foemen's guile.

While wondering thus a bright light filled his eyes,

And some sweet virtue seemed his mind to daze: 'Twas Yndafrene, maid of his Eden days.
And there that hawthorn tree in Paradise,

That Wreath of Myrtle, gemmed with many a flower;

In orient pearls those lines that Wreath above: "Where lives and rules the Hell-born love of power,

There yields and dies the Heaven-born power of love."

And low sweet music filled that mystic dim-lit grove.

There was that Laurel stump, whose banished bough

The gate of Hell at one time did endow;—
(But now to other place perchance it cleaves;)
And there that other branch of Myrtle Leaves,
With pictures gemmed, that brightest seemed
of all,

(For tints of Venus, not of Mars, they bore,) And did at once his mind and soul enthrall: The *Leaves* all full of words,—a glorious store, Wholly by him unseen, and all unread before.

There in a daze, or else the light was dim,
At once these *Leaves* he read, or seemed to read,
Fair Yndafrene somehow assisting him;
For with his mind he read more than with sight.
Then came a shout: his vision did recede,
And all at once the world was full of light.
His eyes he oped: there was that ocean beach,
And far along the coast the sands did bleach;

Some time it took to get his mind in tune,
And in good order all his thoughts arrange;
He felt like one awaking from a swoon,
Whose mind meanwhile had had experience
strange.

Who further reads, the happy words will know Which on the Myrtle Leaves did brightly glow, Varied somewhat by memory's faulty store, And added to, may be, by his invention more.

CANTO 2

A TALK AT THE PALACE

One day in quietude the King reclined, (The Queen, and some companions, near at hand,) While thoughts of other days came to his mind, When war and troubles scourged both sea and land,

Then Legion loomed majestic to his view, And of his valiant services he thought, How he hundreds of pagan foemen slew, And awful havoc in each battle wrought. "There's Strombold, too," he thought; "that mighty chief,
Who hero-like, rushed to Legion's relief,
When sore beset at bloody Wodenow,
While from a hundred wounds his blood did flow;
How beating back the foe with fearful might,
His great horse aiding in his desperate plight,
He brought brave Legion off, held in his arms,—
As though the fates, themselves, lent him their mightiest charms.

"What has become of Strombold and his child?" Inquired the King, thinking them still exiled. Then answered one, a foe, or misinformed, "He, and his child and serf, by pirates slain, Who in the night his rocky dwelling stormed, Hoping upon the isle great wealth to gain, Thinking he riches had in his oak box, So very large it was, so strong its iron locks."

"Oh, I do grieve to learn of their sad fate,"
Spoke up the Queen, taking great interest.
"Don't you remember little Margaret,
Who once came with her parents as a guest,
And whom we both did so much love and pet?
How very fair, and very bright was she!
Really, a lovelier or a grander set
Never in life these eyes of mine did see
Than her, her mother and the mighty Dane.
Strombold, so noble, tall, serene and grand,

Face like a god's, bearing like Charlemagne; His wife so beauteous, gentle, kind and bland: It was a luxury the three to entertain.

"Betrothed was Margaret to Legion's son, Who, crazed with love, in quest of her has gone, No one knows where, while grand old Shonbirg Hall

Deserted is by owner, serf and thrall.

Alas, how Strombold grieved when died his wife.

Never did grief cause greater agony.

His friends feared that he e'en might take his life,

Or else from broken heart would pine and die. In his deep grief he did himself accuse

Of leaving her for fields of bloody strife;

He prayed some day peace on the earth would dwell;

The men who bring on war he did abuse,

And wished them all, head down, sunk deep in hottest Hell.

"These words his enemies did much distort,
And of the facts made you a false report:
So Strombold was through falsehood sacrificed,
Of treason no more guilty he than was the
Christ."

"I think you're right, my dear," the King replied;

"But now that he and child at last have died,

Or been by pirates killed, too late it is To cure the wrong by proper remedies. Piqued, too, I was that he did never seek Pardon complete, and restoration full; Nor would allow a friend of his to speak, And me request his sentence to annul. But Strombold's valor freely I admit, And that it was for my sole benefit. How on the field of battle he did shine! How he did Legion aid at Thormanstine! How all alone with nought but shield and sword A score he routed at dire Freydenford! How like a very devil hot from Hell The Tartar host he fought at Vidarsdell! Never the world will see their like again, Legion the god of war, Strombold the mighty Dane."

CANTO 3

LEGION SUFFERING FROM WOUNDS

By paths of war to reach Fame's golden fane, (So read the *Leaves*,) the Youth had suffered much,

And great the glory that his sword did gain; But that gold crown was e'er beyond his clutch. What most he craved seemed ever him to shun; Honor from all he gained, but love from none; For hate not love the trails of war doth tread, While not for hate, but love, the Youth's great heart was made.

At last that awful ban of Baldurbane
Its wrath in part did work. Among the slain
Half dead was Legion found, all gashed with
wounds,

And weak from loss of blood. The neighboring grounds

Showed how his sword among his foes had wrought,

And the stupendous price, his blood had brought; While in the sky was heard a raven's croak, All supernatural, as though 'twas Odin spoke.

In a rude hospital, stretched on a bed,
Legion himself did find, less live than dead,
His eyes he feebly raised; an aged priest
Was near, his nurse and sole companion,
Who on his face his eyes did seem to feast,
As though in mind he made comparison.
"A face like yours somewhere I once did see,"
Remarked the priest when stronger grew the
Youth;

"Your name I pray you tell, and history,
For more of you I'd know than I've been told,
in sooth."

"My name is Legion. I'm the type of hosts; On land and sea I've been, and on the coasts," Answered the Youth, his thoughts just then afar. "Legion of Shonbirg Hall?" quick asked the priest,

Crossing his breast, and breathing forth a prayer, As though at hand he saw a group of ghosts.

"Where died your father?" "Near this town somewhere,"

Replied the Youth. His cross the priest here kissed.

Praying all angels, and all saints, him to assist.

"One question more: your father's nurse was who?"

"Strombold, the Dane, a comrade brave and true, Aided by Father John, a priest or monk, Who nursed him kindly till his life was gone," Answered the Youth. Upon his knees then sunk The priest and cried, "Young man, I'm Father John!"

And thrice three times his cross did quickly kiss. "O! Mary, holy Mother, bless I thee for this!

"You, then, his son! In truth you have his face; And what is more, his grand magnetic grace. I noticed it when first I saw you here, Though soiled by hands of war as then you were. How oft he talked of you! Much did he fear Ambition you might tempt, as him it did,

In glare to glory, and for fame to fight,— Sometimes ignoring love, and truth and peace and right;

"And if you e'er I met, with tears he bid
Me on your head my hands to place in prayer,
(As now I do,) and charge you not to heed
The Siren voice of glory, nor the creed
Ambition teaches, nor the so-called spell
Of hate; that they but vile temptations are,—
Mere vanities, the spawn of haughtiness and
Hell."

Then to some other work went Father John: "How strange!" he thought, "that mother's fatal curse

At Baldurbane, (where the first Legion won His name and fame,) that all his progeny On battle-fields should early find their hearse, Though doing deeds deserving victory, Until one's heart a shaft of pearl should pierce By a Varangian woman shot, and he Ambition's gilded lures should firmly spurn, And from the ways of war, to paths of peace should turn."

CANTO 4

FATHER JOHN EXORCISES THE SPELL

No earthly king a true knight ever has,
No human kingdom his allegiance owns;
He recognizes neither clan nor class,
And scorns alike both snobs and royal drones.
True unto Truth his heart is wholly sworn,
The good and brave of every land and race
His countrymen, as though of brothers born;
And ever 'gainst their foes, he turns his sword and
face.

To Christ alone he doth in homage bow,
The Holy Church, Christ's bride, his mistress is,
On holy Cross alone he makes his vow,
And with pure heart doth none but virgins kiss.
When lady fair needeth a champion,
Right soon his sword doth flash in her defense;
Whenever wrong is done he rights it soon,
Justice and mercy are among his sacraments.

Such was good Father John when, in his youth, He crusade joined for sake of holy truth; And in the name of Father, Son and Ghost, Battled most bravely 'gainst the Paynim host: His greatest champion by his king avowed, Throughout both armies did his virtues shine, His deeds of valor sounded far and loud All o'er the bloody plains of holy Palestine.

The crusade ended he a priest became,
And all earth's honors did in full disclaim:
The Holy Church he made his goal and home,
Taking his vows before the Pope at Rome.
And now in heart and soul he truly was
The friend of all the good, the foe of sin,
The champion of every holy cause,
His one sole pride to live, the Church of Christ
within.

In seeking how all fiends to circumvent,
And on themselves their deadliest weapons turn,
His deepest thoughts upon their wiles he'd bent,
And all their sorceries did fully learn.
When evil machinations he would thwart,
And to the good and pure true strength impart,
The powers that for all purposes sufficed
He found were Holy Cross, and name of Jesus
Christ.

Knowing from Legion's sire that on his name A deadly spell and curse had been pronounced, Making their road to death their path to fame, This curse the good priest in his heart denounced, And vowed in thought wholly to nullify. So telling Legion what was in his mind, The priest, seeking his soul to raise on high, Upon his wounded breast, a crucifix did bind.

Candles thrice blessed above his head were lit,
And holy water sprinkled well around,
Incense was burned, and Bible texts were writ
Upon the walls and on the naked ground.
The name of Christ was many times pronounced,
And crosses made on hands, and breast, and
brow,

The while all charms and curses he denounced, And oft his knees did bend, his head did lowly bow.

Praying the Christ, his mother and all saints,
Legion to guard against all sorceries,
'Gainst every spell that soul or body taints,
And every curse and wile of enemies;
But above all that ban of Baldurbane,
And that vile raven's croak and enmities,
He exorcised, again, and yet,—again;
And holy water poured, and rung a bell,
Crying, "Begone, ye all! begone, ye fiends of
Hell!"

Lastly round Legion walked he thrice three times, With lighted candle and the Holy Book, Mumbling in solemn tones some sacred rhymes, No hag, nor witch, nor evil fiend could brook, Nor raven hear with heart again to croak. Wearing the Cross of Christ upon his breast, And many rosaries about his neck, He prayed that Legion might be ever blessed,

And all his enemies meet everlasting wreck,-That raven and that curse, of power dispossessed.

A figured Leaf the Scribe's attention drew, Showing a priest, with candle, Book and bell, All spells and curses seeking to undo, And driving fiends back to their homes in Hell, While fast away in fright a monster raven flew.

CANTO 5

LEGION DREAMS OF THE MAID

Lying but half asleep upon his cot, Waiting for time his many wounds to heal, Thoughts of his stormy voyage in that yacht Slow through his mind all dreamingly did steal. Then coo of white sea dove came to his ear, And on his breast that locket's touch he felt, The while his heart did feel that single hair: Then in a flood of grief, his very soul did melt.

Behold the Maiden's face did now appear, So sad, so fair, so loving, and so dear! Oh, what a heavy load from off the heart True love can lift, with but a single hair! While thinking of the Maid a gentle sleep Within its arms his form did softly fold, And in his soul a tender dream did creep As fair and plain as eyes did e'er behold.

A sea dove saw he floating on a chip,
Far out at sea, but ever drawing near.
Then came a change, and lo, a little ship,
Which gentle breezes seemed to move and steer;
And at its prow, looking towards the land,
Fair Margie stood, with great tears in her eyes,
Sprigs of forget-me-not within her hand,
And in her bosom love, strugging with grief and
sighs.

"I'm searching for my love," she seemed to say;
"To find him all the world I've wandered o'er,
Traveling in dreams by night, in thoughts by
day,

Scanning all islands and all continents, All oceans, seas and lakes, from shore to shore, Telling to all the winds my sad laments, As every little nook, and corner, I explore.

"Sad sighs for him I breathe where'er I go,
While sorrow's tears all ceaselessly do flow.
Never at rest am I, nowhere can stay;
Were I to stop that moment would I die.
So, ever am I going night and day,
Until my lover's face doth greet my eye;
Then will my spirit thrill with ecstasy,
And nevermore my soul will grieve, or weep, or
sigh."

This dream all passed, another dream he had:
An awful chasm right in his pathway lay,
To cross o'er which no bridge he had nor aid,
While death therein awaited him for prey.
Then came an angel having Margie's face,
Yet having somehow Pearl's bewitching grace,
And with a smile away his fears did soothe.
Across the chasm, in her arms' embrace
Hither she bore him safe, and here his path did
smooth.

His eyes the Youth did ope: somehow the world Had brighter grown, and happier his heart. His griefs and pains had far away been hurled, And something to his soul did joy impart. He knew it not, but whether dream the cause, Or only the effect, when it had passed The crisis with it passed, and danger was Behind, he on the road to health at last,—
That road all straight and smooth with flowers decked:

So happy was his heart, with good things to expect.

CANTO 6

LEGION SENDS A MISSIVE TO THE MAID

Then to the priest the Youth his dreams did tell; How came some angel and his wounds did soothe; Then bore him safe across the chasm of Hell, And laid him here on bed so soft and smooth.

Much did he wonder how had gone his pain,

And why he'd 'scaped that curse of Baldurbane.

Next thought he how his father there once lay,

By Strombold kindly nursed, till life had passed away.

"Father," he asked, "where is brave Strombold now?"

"Banished he was, some ten long years ago,"
The priest replied; "to little Redenfayn,
An ocean isle, where smugglers for their den
A palace built, fit for a king's domain.
But innocent he was: designing men,
His enemies, the King did much deceive.
And that Strombold a traitor was made him believe.

"But now that all the facts are fully known,
Nothing appears for which he should atone.
A message came his wife was nigh to death:
Of all but love for her wholly bereft,
Strombold without permit the army left.
They told the King that he was false in faith.
Free from all guile, too proud to pray reprieve,
There exiled lives he yet, unless reports deceive."

Anxious some good for Strombold to perform, These words unto the Youth made strong appeal, And to his father's friend his heart did warm. "Oh, holy father," said the Youth, "I feel

Upon my soul a debt to Strombold due. With me, some proper time, I pray that you Will go upon a mission to the King, And to his mind these matters fully bring, And pardon beg for Strombold, with return Of all his titles, honors, serfs and lands. What you have said has made my heart to yearn, That justice may be done, by our good King's commands."

"Most gladly will I go for sake of you, And your most noble sire, whom I did love; For Strombold's sake, who was both brave and true.

And for sweet justice' sake, all else above." The Youth then told the priest he wished to send A missive to the Maid to let her know He was alive, and loved her as a friend, And hoped again unto her isle to go. "For," Legion said, "we were betrothed in youth When she was 'Pearl' and I was 'Many' named; And ne'er before did I suspect the truth. Much have I done for which myself I've blamed, Not knowing she was mighty Strombold's child, But always thinking her some other one exiled."

"The missive give to me, I'll have it sent," The priest replied, "if no bad luck prevent. Your sire said oft to me, and to the Dane, His great wish was you two when grown would wed.

And his and Strombold's stocks become one strain,

Their fame milk-white, and not by blood stained red.

A serf I know who owns a sailing boat,
And does not fear a trip upon the main."
Then to the Maid the Youth this tender letter
wrote:

"Margie, my darling love, alive and well I pray you are, and your most noble Sire. To see you soon, and my devotion tell, Is the one thought that doth my soul inspire. A plan I have to bring great happiness To you, your Sire, and me. Some months may pass Before we meet: to me months of distress. I hope you love me yet; for you I pine, And ne'er can happy be until your hand I hold, your sweet lips kiss, and call you mine. Fate do I feel is loosening its band, And ne'er again will stand 'tween me and you. Be of good cheer. Legion, your lover true. I Many am, and you the Pearl I've missed: This I've just learned from Father John, a priest. That dog's deep scar I bear, plain graven on my wrist."

Forthwith the priest produced his messenger, A faithful serf, accustomed to the sea; To him the Youth then gave the missive dear, That to the door of joy would prove the key; Told him what things to do, what questions ask; And promised great reward if safely he The missive took, and well performed his task; But warning him, whatever he might lack, Never, never to fail to bring her answer back.

CANTO 7

THE MAID RECEIVES LEGION'S MISSIVE

Bright was the sky, and balmy was the air,
While all about the sea-gulls white did flit,
With nought their plans or happiness to mar:
Indeed, it seemed to all a time for glee.
Upon the cliff where he did use to sit,
And musing gaze upon the mighty sea,
Did sit the Maid, looking through tears afar,
Upon the billowy flood, hoping, some day,
A boat to see bearing him back to her:
So had she ever hoped, so did she watch and
pray.

That morn a strong presentiment had she That some good thing that day to her would bring;

For oft and sweet she heard a robin sing, Perched on the topmost bough of lofty tree, While near at hand the white sea dove did coo. A gentle breeze came singing o'er the sea, And far away, in fright, a raven flew;
While in the highest sky, an eagle came to view.
That Angel had the Maiden's heart prepared,
By happy dreams, for happy news that day;
And though the morning sun most fiercely glared,
And in her face the wind was blowing free,
Her eyes she strained to scan the distant sea.
At last she saw upon its utmost swell,—
Or thought mayhap she saw, a speck that rose
and fell.

Oh, how for eagle's eyes her heart did long
To see what thing if aught that speck might be;
And how for eagle's wings both swift and strong,
Thither to fly across the shining sea,
That she might learn indeed the very truth.
She knew a boat it was, but not enough;
Though sure, more certainty she wished, forsooth;
No doubt at all she had, but wanted further proof.

Nearer it came, by winds and waves propelled, By tides borne in. Plainly it was beheld. What had at first appeared the merest mote Now loomed against the sky,—oh, joy!—a boat! On board a common man,—but Legion,—not! Then quailed her heart, and terrible her thought, That after all, alas, some evil news was brought.

Down from the cliff towards the beach she sped,
Her limbs all weak, and almost gone her breath,
Her spirit trembling with an awful dread,
Her face as bloodless as the brow of death;—
But on she went, and could not help but go;
A power unseen did force her to the shore,
And die she would, or else the truth would know,
E'en though that truth should be, that Legion
was no more.

When reached the boat the shore she too was there.

"What news?" the Maiden asked; "what tidings bear?"

Her peace she could not hold, too great the strain. "My lord, Sir Legion, does a letter send To Strombold's daughter, Maid of Redenfayn," Replied the serf, while he his knee did bend, In homage low. "Lady, are you the Maid?" "Oh, then he lives!" she cried; her fears somewhat allayed.

"Lady, he lives," the boatman quick replied.
"Oh, thanks, good God!—and thanks to you,"
she cried:

Her face though wet from tears with rapture glowed,

And bright her eyes shone forth from their abode. "Are you both well?—you, and your noble Sire? My lord bade me most specially inquire."

"Quite well, my father, sir; but as for me, Tell him, not well, not well,—as you, yourself, may see."

Sadly she spoke. "This letter unto you He bade me bring, and take your answer back." The boatman said, and forth the letter drew, Which quick, but nervously the Maid did take. "Please, lady, if you can, quick answer make, The tide begins to ebb—its help I need." She turned, and as she went, the letter she did read.

"'My deep devotion tell'—oh, words so sweet!
How like a dream of blissful ecstasies!
He wants 'my hand to hold,' when we do meet,
And 'call me his';—oh, joy! and 'my lips kiss.'
Oh, thought delicious, that he'll call me 'his!'
For me he says he 'pines'—for me! poor boy!
'Legion, your lover true': oh, saints above,
How sweet indeed he is! What perfect joy
Such words to read. 'Margie, my darling love'
The last and first the best of all he writes:
His 'darling' I, and he 'my lover true.'
Until he comes, these words my chief delights."
Just then softly o'erhead, her white sea dove did
coo.

CANTO 8

THE MAID ANSWERS THE MISSIVE

Towards the dove the Maiden turned her eye,
And on the Maid the dove did sweetly look,
Whereat she felt a thrill of conjury
That all her soul with perfect rapture shook.
But soon the Maid gave forth a startling cry,
As though a thing of joy she did espy
Which did her soul to ecstasy excite;
Then thus, with face all bright, gave voice to her
delight:

"But see! a postscript here: oh, saints above,
Can this be true? Am I awake, and sane?
Or walk I in my sleep, and dream of love?
Oh, Mary mother! help me stand this strain.
Eyes, read you right? or do you play some trick?
I scarce can stand, and hardly get my breath.
Down must I sit awhile, my mind is sick;
Or else somehow I'm crazed, and near at last to death."

Then on a near-by rock a seat she took, And closely on the letter did she look. "He says, 'he's Many, I the Pearl he's missed.' And that 'dog's scar he bears upon his wrist.' Oh, words too precious to be true, I fear. If this be so my grief has not been vain. A priest did tell him, and he can not err. Upon his wrist I saw that scar all plain. Oh, joy! oh, joy! my life comes back to me again.

"Stronger I feel, and so I'll hurry on;
For that good boatman wishes to be gone."
So up she rose, and hastened on her way;
But never failed the letter to survey.
"Oh, I had sometimes hoped it might be so;
But then too sweet it seemed ever to be.
How in my memory now the past doth grow!
And in that park 'Many' so plain I see.
Yes, I was 'Pearl' in that far happy day,
And 'Many' was my mate in childhood's play.
Once our two fathers joined our little hands,
To show that we were bound, by firm betrothment bands."

Reaching her room she quickly wrote reply: "Legion, my only love, my dearest one: Your letter comes like message from the sky. Had it not come my life had ended soon. With sweetest joy my soul your promise fills; Yet will I die if you do linger more. You here I'll live, but oh, your absence kills. My poor sad soul is sick, unto its very core.

"That you my 'Many' are gives me delight.

To hope that you were he I scarcely dared.

Through our dear fathers we our troth did plight;

But that we'd meet again I had despaired.

And now I'm thrilled with blissful ecstasy
To know that 'Many' lives, and you are he.
Kind Heaven I feel has come to my relief,
And soon, I hope and pray, will end my bitter grief.

"No more I've time to write, nor strength, nor heart. Your boat my answer waits beside the shore. No longer can I live from you apart:
Come soon, or you may never see me more.
I'll try to live, for oh, how I do yearn
To be alive when you at last return.
So come, oh, Legion, come; come right away.
Nothing but you my soul will satisfy.
Then dearest, come at once; make no delay,
So I your face may see, once more before I die."

Kissing her answer, hard unto her heart
She pressed the sheet, and prayed it would impart
To Legion's soul such proof of her deep love
That to her side he'd haste, and never more would
rove.

A warning ring the boatman's bell she heard:
Her pen she dropped, and wrote no other word.
All nervously the sheet she folded up,
Failing her name to sign,—while down did drop
Great tears, emotion strong o'er-mastering her.
Back to the boat she went as best she could,
And gave her answer to the messenger,
Who turned his boat into the ebbing flood,
And quickly sailed away, without a word, or nod.

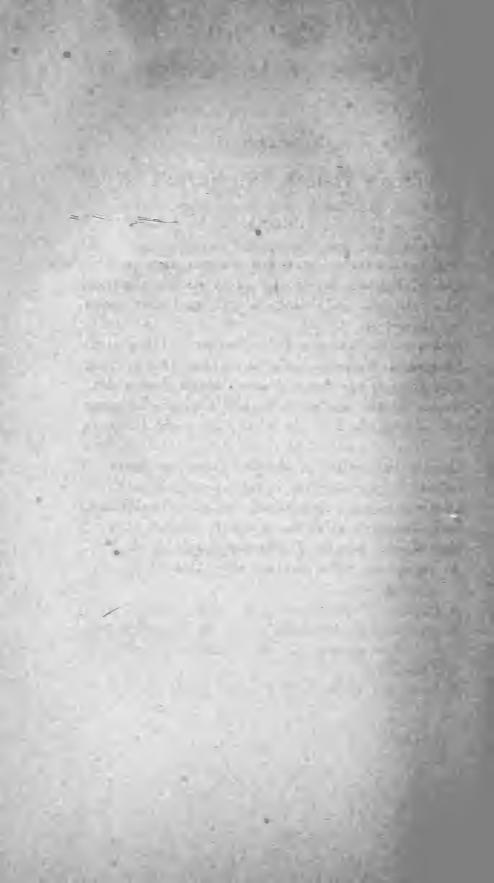
So read the Leaves; pictured on one a boat,
Like vision seen in fancy's horoscope;
And from it's mainmast's top did gayly float
A shining flag, on which was painted, "Hope."
Whereat the Scribe did wonder, could it mean
That there was hope for him with Yndafrene.
And as his wrist a dog's deep scar did bear,
(Made in his early youth), he thought, perchance,
That he might yet, in some way, have a share
In that great bliss to come, in this most strange
romance.

CHAPTER II

LEGION'S VISIONS AND REPENTANCE

PROEM

While suffering from his wounds and weak in health, Legion has visions of mystic significance, which that Angel brings about, and then helps him to interpret. He sees love, in all its beauty, destroyed by hate, in all its horror. The statues of Fraud, Falsehood, Ambition and the People's Idol come to his view. Pondering on these visions the awful thought came to him that his ambition was leading him to do what Hell most honored, and Heaven most abhorred. As a result, after a short struggle for a bloodless fame, he casts all ambition from his heart, and repents all his deeds to win renown. An old man tells him that Fame, herself, searches for those worthy of her crowns; and advises him to follow the guidance of love. This old man proves to be Father John.



CANTO 1

THE POWER OF LOVE: THE LOVE OF POWER

WITH all his enemies the King made peace,
His barons, knights and nobles did release,
Disbanded all his troops and vassal train,
And to successful end brought his campaign.
But though all fiends and spells by him abjured,
The Youth's deep wounds not yet were fully
cured:

Hot was his blood, and fevered was his brain,
Fast beat his pulse, and wandered far his mind,
Closed were his eyes: another world appeared:
There dulcet notes he heard, with merry song
combined.

His eyes he oped,—and, lo! a scene most rare Of loveliness. Angels were everywhere, On land, in air. A thousand bright-winged birds Sang sweetly all about, as tame as fair; And lovely animals roamed 'round in herds.

A thousand vales wound through the grassy lands;

A thousand isles shone in the silver seas;

A thousand waves broke gently on the sands;

Trees, flowers and shrubs luxuriant grew and bloomed:

A thousand mansions high and lovely loomed;

While every breeze bore smells of blooms and spice,

Making as fair a scene, as e'er was Paradise.

On every face were beams of happiness; Peace ruled the seas, and mirth the isles and vales,

While sweetest symphonies the air did bless, As though all filled with souls of nightingales; And all the world with pleasure seemed entranced. Making low music with their arms and feet, O'er meads and lakes great troops of Angels danced,

With merriment and song: their chorus sweet: "The power of love! behold the power of love! On earth, in sea, in air, and in the heavens above!"

As danced and laughed and sung these creatures bright,

There came a crash,—and all was dark as night.

Most awfully loud thunders rolled o'erhead;

Fierce lightnings flamed, and in their ghastly light.

Mid pools of blood, lay thousands pale and dead. Many waste cots shone ghastly on the plain,—And ruined palaces. Here rotted grain In roofless barns; there in the furrow stood The plow, the plowman dead for want of food.

Then shouts arose, drums rolled, and bugles blew, And vilest outlaws all the earth subdued: Some burned, some robbed, some browbeat and some slew,

While plundered cities flamed beside the sea,
And nations groaned because no longer free.
Grim War, careering in his bloody car,
With fire and sword made havoc near and far,
And all the world with sorrow loud did moan:
While countless flends all through the air did
lower,

Out from the sky came in sad monotone: "Behold the love of power! Behold the love of power!"

Upon a ghastly heap of human bones,
By ignis fatuus lit, a scarlet sash
And crown of gold did lie, set with bright stones;
While near at hand a naked sword he saw,
Made with great skill either to stab or gash,
Its hilt of ebony, and on its blade
In blood was writ, "Ambition's only law";—
And o'er it thrown a wreath, of greenest laurel made.

CANTO 2

THE HALL OF FRAUDS

Then came a sudden change: a hall appeared,—
Lofty and wide, fit for a monarch's seat,
Where sculptors worked on images upreared:
The Hall of Frauds, where devils wrought deceit.
There "Freedom" charming stood: upon her head
The cap of liberty, upon her shield
A screaming eagle with his wings wide spread,
Her motto bright "All slavery repealed";
A broken lock and shackle in her hand.
The Youth suspicious peeped beneath her hood,—
Her face was faction's own; her robe so grand
He raised,—and lo! upon the necks of slaves she
stood!

The "People's Idol" showed his dingy dress:
Open his hands, his face with bright smiles lit,
But in his head and heart deceitfulness.
Upon his breast a glass whereon was writ:
"A plain man I, and show my heart to all."
The Youth looked in: that glass a mirror was
That beautified his face, and thus did thrall.
"So 'tis," he said; "men are most pleased with those

Who seem most like themselves,—as twin loves twin;

And they who've most deceit, often most praises win."

An image in the center shining stood,
Of form most fair, face like a presbyter's,
And all the aspect of a comrade good:
'Twas "Fraud," arch-fiend of all the universe.
In his right hand were promises,—a host,
Sounding like truth and strong the heart to win;
His left an apple held, as red as blood,
Unto the sight most fair, to smell most sweet,
But in its heart the vilest worms did brood:
At once fit means and emblems of deceit.
One pocket a long poniard did enfold,
The other many coins as bright as gold,
But which, when to the test he did submit,
Were found all galvanized, or grossly counterfeit.

Near "Fraud" an image was,—spectacular,
All front and face, no body, head nor legs,
Suspended in one's sight by viewless pegs;
Thin as of canvas made, but viewed afar,
Of solid substance seemed. "Falsehood" its
name,—

Little but aspect, face and lineament:
No muscles, flesh nor bones composed its frame,—
Except sweet lips, smooth tongue and cogent jaw.
Out of its mouth went words most eloquent,
That made the listener think, what he did hear
he saw.

CANTO 3

THE STATUE OF AMBITION

Before them all "Ambition" loomed supreme,
In majesty sublime; divine,—almost:
His countenance all Legion-like did seem;
But pale his cheek, and cold his eye did gleam.
All in and of himself he seemed engrossed.
Across his brow were furrows deep of care.
Upon his head a crown effulgent blazed,
Enchanting all who saw its magic glare,
And all about were men who sang and praised,
While screamed an eagle bright, high in the noonday air.

Of royal purple were his robes of state,
And on the thrones of kings he stood sublime;
But murdered men the Youth saw 'neath his feet,
And broken laws and oaths by which to climb.
Despair and Misery crouched beneath his throne.
His royal robes these horrid scenes all hid,
As with his mighty limbs he them bestrid.
In his right hand a jeweled scepter shone,
His left held forth Fame's fruit men love to win,
Golden it was without, ashes alone within.

"All finished and complete!" the sculptor cried, Who on "Ambition" had the carving done, And the grand statue greatly glorified,—Making of it a master paragon.

Then sounded many shouts, mixed in with boasts; While over all resounded fate's decree: "His name is Legion: he's the type of hosts, And what he personates, most men would like to be."

Then all the sculptors, artisans and drones
Joined in an acclamation thunder-loud,
That shook the pillars, walls and pavement stones,
Till every image moved, and many bowed.
"Hope's" statue fell; and fragments o'er the floor
Did scatter wide,—a ruin absolute.
Upon this scene the Youth did deeply pore,
Wondering what might events, so strange, impute.

And then "Ambition's" name was "Legion: he
The type of hosts,"—and that, he thought, meant
him!

And this the spectral sculptors' own decree.

That devils should his name and features limn

Upon "Ambition's" statue, then in glee

The deed loudly acclaim, made the Youth's senses swim.

Then, in an instant, all these scenes did hide, And a high mountain loomed before his eyes; Upon its top the Christ, while at his side Ambition stood in Satan's brightest guise, Displaying all of Satan's haughty pride, And with earth's panorama all unfurled,
Offered to Him the kingdoms of the world,
With all their glory, and magnificence,—
If Jesus would but bow and worship him,
And thus declare Satan his preference;—
While looking on afar were Heaven's cherubim.

Then in his soul the Youth did truly know
Ambition was but Satan in disguise,
Seeking all righteousness to overthrow,
And cause mankind himself to idolize,—
Till God, and truth and love, no soul would seek
to know.

Startled just then by raven's raucous croak, As from a nightmare dream Legion awoke. Within his soul he seemed to hear the shock Of Hell's gates' closing crash, and startling lock. When he awoke long time he was in doubt, Whether he'd dreamed, or what he'd seen was real. New thoughts within his mind began to sprout As each scene's meaning did itself reveal. Himself as in a mirror he did view, Led by ambition devils' deeds to do. Little he thought his Guardian Angel planned All these his dreams to make him understand What evil webs ambition ever weaves About one's heart and soul: so read the Myrtle Leaves;

And on them pictures shone: the wondrous sights That Legion saw in dreams, on restless nights; Frauds, liars, demagogues, and hypocrites; And how it is Satan makes proselytes. Therein Ambition loomed, all full of boasts, Crying, "My name is Legion, I'm the type of hosts."

CANTO 4

LEGION'S LAST STRUGGLE FOR FAME

The Youth, to health and strength once more restored.

All schemes of fame through war did now recant, And laid aside his helmet, shield and sword. But not content all glory to forego, Some virus of ambition still extant Resolved to struggle on, without a blow, By paths of peace the dome of Fame to seek; And glad he was as on new ground he stood, That while on Paynim hosts his sword did wreak Vengeance most terrible, he'd shed no Christian blood.

Right on he went, but somehow good luck lacked; By sturdy foes beset, by friends not backed. Once did Fame's temple gleam before his eyes, Like some bright rainbow low in distant skies;

But its red glow soon did in darkness fade. Seldom his clouded soul the light relieved, And then but memories of the island Maid, Whose letter, by some fate, he'd never yet received.

In the new fields where fame the Youth did seek He saw the images whereof he'd dreamed: There was "Hypocrisy," with aspect meek, Who 'neath the mask of "Holiness" beseemed. And there was "Liberty," all fierce and wild, Appealing to all rebels 'gainst the right, As though she was fair "Freedom's" only child, And so entitled was, to lead them in their fight.

"Fraud," too, was there seeking the right to wreck;

Busy was "Falsehood," pouring forth her words; "Justice" sat on her bench, waiting a beck;

And 'neath ten thousand cloaks were hidden swords.

But 'mong the rushing crowds and thronging hordes,

In vain for Truth and Right his eyes did seek, In vain for Love and Faith his heart did speak: All men seemed looking wild, for what was most unique. Then, on a sudden, rose a thund'rous noise.

"Hurra! the People's Idol!" cried a voice.

A man sped by 'mid shouts o'er many foes,
With aspect sweet and grand as demi-god's.

Him had the Youth seen in the Hall of Frauds,
And tried at once the imposture to expose.

A hundred hands hurled him adown the steep;
And all he'd won he thus, at once, did lose:
That ban of Baldurbane some vigor seemed to
keep.

While to the skies applause like thunder rolled, The Youth looked up: behold, Fame's dome of gold,

And almost there the "People's Idol" shone.

"Why did I speak?" he groaned: "oh, cruel fate!

So 'Fraud' they crown, and merit they disown."

But not a moment did he hesitate;

Back to his place he labored hard to climb,

Firmly resolved never to make retreat,—

While yet he saw the dome of Fame sublime.

But every bough he grasped broke 'neath his weight,

And every rock gave way, beneath his climbing feet.

"Useless your toil, my son," a kind voice said. He turned: a gray-haired man was standing near. "Who seeketh Fame's bright dome by dreams is led, For only in a dream doth it appear:

A mere mirage, a fabric of the brain,
Like fairies' homes, and chateaux grand in Spain.
Wicked the glory that in blood is writ,
And brightest does it shine in Hell's profoundest pit.

"The truly great use neither force nor guiles,
A crown to win upon their brow to wear:
These Fame herself seeks out, and with true
smiles

Upon their heads doth place her laurel crown.

They know it not, and little do they care;

But all the world beholds, and shouts their great renown.

"Fame's a mere bubble, shining in the mind,
That takes the form of what we most do crave;
And, ever charming, seems for us designed,
Just overhead, and in our reach,—if brave.
Yet seldom get we it within our hand,
And when we do, that prize so dear and grand
Proves but a bubble filled with nought but air:
Seek love for guide, my son, and better will you
fare."

Then bowed the Youth and humbly thanked the sage,

Who left as suddenly as he had come, Giving the Youth no chance his personage To ascertain, his mission, or his home; But out of sight he scarcely yet had gone When came the startling thought, that he was Father John!

Confounded by experience so strange,
The Youth here paused, his thoughts to rearrange.

Then came his father's message to his mind, And what he'd seen within Hell's Hall of Frauds, And on his fields of strife, all which combined With other dreams and signs, showed that his roads

Led down to infamy, not up to fame; And that he'd played a part in Satan's wicked game.

CANTO 5

LEGION'S PENITENCE

Rough is the pathway of adversity,
But to repentance 'tis the shortest road;
And thence it leads unto the saints' abode,
Through man's own righteousness, and Heaven's clemency.

"One gets the booty, others bear the blame; A hundred lose where one no better wins, Their losses go to make his crown of fame." Thus mused the Youth repenting of his sins. "A thousand heroes die in bloody war,
That one no braver may display a star;
A million people 'neath taxation groan,
That one no worthier may have a throne;
Ten million fishes throng the billowy seas,
That one huge whale may live, and have his jubilees.

"Thus selfishness is ever all for self,
And nothing cares for right and brotherhood;
It reaches far and wide for power and pelf,
And gives no thought unto another's good."
Thus thought the Youth, his head bowed low in grief.

Ambition's spell no longer did control, And fate's tough bonds burst off his swelling soul, Thus giving his cramped will its long-desired relief.

"Oh, God, oft in my soul Thy voice I've heard, But proud my heart, and stubborn was my will. Henceforth I'll heed my father's dying word, And his injunctions in all things fulfill, Forgetting not the visions I did dream. There is no 'Destiny': God is supreme, And 'Fate' but His decree,—before unknown. Ambition's all I do repudiate, And fame and glory, power and pride disown; As vanities them all I do abominate.

"Not for myself, but for my fellow men, Henceforth I'll work, a common citizen; And in their happiness and gratitude, And the delights of loving brotherhood, Find all the joy a mortal e'er should know."-That Angel was at work, for so the Leaves did show.

Then in his soul these words he seemed to hear: "True fame has he whom all good men revere, Who not for self did work, but for his race; Whose portrait wreathed, high in the holy place Of rich and poor alike, is fondly hung; His name by saintly women held most dear, His praises by the holy angels sung, And on his head Heaven's best blessings prayed By those his hand, and heart, have helped and happy made."

Repentance enters through confession's door, And none but noble souls do enter in. Stings hath remorse and makes the conscience

A balm repentance hath that cures from sin The wounded soul, and soothing comfort gives; That life on earth both blesses and outlives,

And is, at last, our passport to the skies,—
Which when presented opes the pearly door.
Repentance Heaven wholly satisfies:
Why then should wicked men, on earth, insist on more?

We all do err, but all do not repent.

Let him who's free from sin the first stone cast,
And him who's not cast none, or else the last;
And let all others first be penitent.

When sin is judged let Sin not hold the scales,
But rather him who once Sin's lure has felt,
And yielding has in traffic with her dealt;
But now his deeds repents and loud his guilt bewails.

Who well repents, his sins go with the wind.
No man wins Heaven because he never sinned;
But gladly he in Heaven is received,
Who having sinned wears now upon his brow
The hazel wreath by penitence achieved,
And all his wicked deeds, in grief doth disavow.

A Leaf here showed an allegory bright: First worm, then chrysalis, then butterfly; First man, then penitent, then soul all white,— Showing how penitence the base can glorify.

CANTO 6

LEGION'S REFORMS

Legion had faced about,—with heart contrite, His soul had cleansed from all its sins and grimes, His liberty declared to do the right, Repented of his errors and his crimes, And firmly had resolved that, come what might, Henceforth he'd strive his fellow man to bless By deeds of charity, and humble righteousness.

From Fame's rough roads, and proud Ambition's paths,

Paved not by love but wrought by wars and wraths.

Legion had turned, and wandered as though blind, Not caring so them all he left behind. His planet Mars shone faintly in the west, As though from deeds of war it sought a rest. Upon the earth now were the steps of night, And from her shadowy robes fell chilling dews. Through clambering vines and window shone a light,

Which all about a house a glimmer did diffuse.

He reached the door and thereon gently tapped: A woman came; he begged to stay till morn, Saying the earth in darkness was all wrapped, And he a stranger there, and travel worn,

From journeying on the Varangian coasts; And hungry was withal. His name she bade. "My name is Legion: I'm the type of hosts," He answered mournfully. "Why seem so sad?" Inquired she. "For sweat and blood misspent, For fame and glory sought afar in vain, Love thrown away, and hate my only gain: But all my many sins, I bitterly repent.—

"Now, food and rest I need that I may live."

A gracious welcome did her husband give,

And food and drink set forth. Talk he could

not,—

For wretchedness. A room, a chair and cot
Were given him; but sleep kept far away.
A grinding grief all rest did negative.
On trembling knees did he bend down and pray,
As at his mother's side, in childhood's day,
He oft had prayed. "Oh, God, my wickedness
Forgive! My errors all I plainly see.
And all my sins without excuse confess;
Here I repent my wicked deeds 'gainst Thee,
Nor e'er my will, again, shall rise in mutiny.

"Unto mankind my life I consecrate,
And pray Thee, and the Christ, and all the
saints,

In this resolve to keep me firm as fate,— Forever free from sin, and its vile taints." Then he arose and sat beside his bed, His mind and heart and soul somewhat at rest, And thus unto himself, abstracted said,— His countenance illumed, by halo manifest:

"My famous father, on his dying bed,
With glory like a garment o'er him spread,
Had wisdom greater far than ever I:
How then dare I his warning words defy?
Now hearkening unto those solemn words,
To mother's prayers, (which right now do I feel),
To my late dreams of glory, spears and swords,
Ambition, falsehood, fraud, and fame and Hell,—
To that sweet witchery, (what I can not tell),
Which ever by my side watches and prays,
All mists of error vanish from my eyes,
My mind and heart and soul seem all ablaze;
And in my future see I happier skies,
And on the far horizon, gleams of Paradise."

Then to his spirit came a soothing calm,
And sleep most sweet applied her magic balm.
While thus he slept he dreamed, or else did hear,
Sung by his hostess, or that Angel near,
The precious words and tones of this most holy
psalm:

THE PSALM OF REPENTANCE

"Did we not err we'd not be human;
To err is not complete disgrace
Be it by angel, man or woman,—
If they their downward steps retrace.

"God quick forgives repentant sinners; Tears for sins done shine in His sight, Those mortals are the final winners, Who for their sins are most contrite.

"Repentance opes the door of Heaven, And cleans the soul from all its wrongs; The brightest angels those forgiven, And from their lips the loudest songs."

CHAPTER III

LEGION REPENTS, AND THE RESULTS

PROEM

Pondering on the old man's counsel, Legion sees things in a new light, and repudiates all of his ambitions. Directed by his mother in a dream, he joins a Crusade, in expiation of his sins of ambition; and aids the Emperor in redeeming Jerusalem, and the Holy Sepulcher, from the power of the infidels. Influenced by vivid dreams he finally leaves Jerusalem for Redenfayn, having first sent a message to the Maid, in a locket, by a dove. The raven vows to destroy the dove, but the Angel inspires the eagle to defeat the raven. The Scribe writes a plain letter to Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

LEGION JOINS A CRUSADE

At dawn to rise Legion was very loth:
Then came a voice or vision,—one or both:
'Twas of his mother,—that dear blessed saint,
And plainly to his soul thus made complaint:
"Ambition, and pursuit of worldly fame,
Afar astray from right your paths have bent,
And many sins your soul do stain, which claim
Some expiation, or some punishment,—
You by ambition from the right enticed.
Look at Jerusalem, the home of Christ,
(For which we did so long such warfare wage,)
Again beneath the Turk's polluting doom.
Thither as warrior make your pilgrimage,
And win at once God's grace, and Christ's most holy Tomb."

E'en like a trumpet's call these words divine;
Deep in his soul they woke a holy pride.
Around a bright light shone, or seemed to shine,
That much his room enlarged and glorified.
So deeply was his heart and spirit pleased,
That from his cot he sprung, his sword he seized,
And on its hilt, as on a cross, he swore,
Straightway to go unto the Emperor,
And join his army 'gainst the infidel,

And never stay his heart, head, hand or heel, Whate'er the cost in treasure, pain and blood, Until, in spite of sin and fate and Hell, By Jesus' holy Tomb, victorious he stood.

"I go where duty calls, and when is done My task," he said, "I'll go where love doth call, Towards that mighty sea where sets the sun, And visit that dear one, who holds my heart in thrall."

At once enlisting in this holy war,
He joined the forces of the Emperor.
Upon his shield most plain he did emboss,
In figures large and bright the Holy Cross.
His faith he vowed, and pledged his spear and sword,

Ever to fight until was all restored To Christian custody, the City of the Lord.

Inspired he was by what he'd heard and read Of mighty heroes who great armies led, In former crusades 'gainst the infidels, And in great battles wrought great miracles. For still he loved that high and holy fame, Which angels praise, and saints commemorate, Which priests and poets with delight proclaim, And Church and State alike do venerate. So every energy did Legion strain Such Christian fame deservedly to gain;

On land and sea fighting all hero-like
Worthy his holy task himself to prove.
Yet not in hate did he e'er Moslem strike,
But as his love for Christ did heart and muscle
move.

Great deeds he wrought which sounded far and wide,

And 'mong the Moslems thundered like a storm,—And thus both armies all electrified:
His acts and bearing wrought so great a charm Almost a demi-god he seemed to shine.
Some thought him Michael clothed in human form, Or else great Godfrey from his holy shrine:
His deeds of war so brave, his acts of peace divine.

Still onward marched the mighty Emperor
With his great army, waging deadly war
Against all enemies, on land and sea.
One day, sacred in Legion's memory,
Like some sublime celestial diadem,
Afar above the hills of Palestine,
Uploomed the shining walls, and towers divine,
Of long-desired Holy Jerusalem,
As on a lofty throne up seated high;
Like God's huge hollowed hand, the noon-day sky
Making all bright, above, a heavenly canopy.

Then up from fifty thousand happy throats Went outcries of delight and joyful shouts, So rapturous that host's felicity.

Ahead the priests and knights marched solemnly,
Thinking of Him whom sin did crucify;
But now feeling a glorious triumph nigh,
Shouted "Hosanna, blessed is the King,
That cometh in the name of Christ, the Lord!"
The mighty host all shouting in accord,
Till valley, mount and sky, did with the echoes
ring.

And when the City's gates were almost reached, Within, without, arose ten thousand roars, While here and there the lofty walls were breached.

Again they shouted, 'mid the mighty din,
"Lift up, oh gates! Ye everlasting doors,
Lift up! lift up! the King of Glory cometh in!"

Oh, such a day seldom on mortals waits,
While on this earth abide both woe and sin!
Then opened wide the City's lofty gates,
And all that Christian army entered in.
The Moslem crescent o'er the walls was cast,
And in its place the Cross of Christ upreared,
'Mid hallelujahs and the trumpet's blast.
A day it was when earth the heavens neared;
And many with a faith strong born of hope,
Assembled on the heights in mighty crowds,
Rising triumphant far above all fears,
Looked up trusting to see the heavens ope,

And Jesus and his angels, in bright clouds Coming to reign on earth, a thousand happy years.

Legion no credit claimed for what he'd done,
But all his sins confessed, and pardon prayed;
And thanked his God that sin he'd learned to shun,
And begged His blessing and eternal aid.
A priest on Legion's head his hands did place,
And for his help in battling for the Tomb,
Did from his soul all sins and stains efface;
And absolution gave, and perfect grace,
Thereby preserving him from final doom:
Then wrote his name upon the Crusade roll,
Thereby securing him Christ's blessings on his
soul.

For months the raven he'd not seen, nor heard; While from his thought that curse was almost gone:

So, he with pious gratefulness inferred, They'd been destroyed by prayers of Father John,

Or that by Crusade deeds, immunity he'd won.

CANTO 2

THE RAVEN AT WALPURGIS-NIGHT

In an abyss of rock, dark and profound,
Beneath a towering crag on demon ground,
Covered by gloomy pines, and shadows black,
Which nought suggested not demoniac;—
Where sheds the sun no heat, and little light,
And never shines the moon on any night,
Great ogres grim of ancient days had built,
With aid of demons strong, and fiends of guilt,
A palace grand for Odin and his court,
Where they, when on the earth, might have a fit
resort.

Here every year, upon Walpurgis-night,
Assembled beings vile, who dread the light,
From all the earth, despite the elements;
Crossing wide oceans and broad continents.
And now around its ancient banquet board
Together met, of such, a monstrous horde;
Spirits malign from all the woods and caves,
From highest mounts of earth, and dens beneath
the waves:

Magi, from lands beyond old Babylon,
Who now, debased, worshiped nor fire nor sun;
Vampires, from Saxon woods and Gallic plains,
Were-wolves, from where once lived the mighty
Danes,

Fiends, from the utmost regions of the west, Beyond that sea across which Eric pressed; Shamans and ghouls, from ancient Tartary; Hags, from far Spain, old Greece and Italy; Grim obi-men, from Afric's straw-made stalls, And deadly Yama priests, from Asia's holy halls;

Demons of Ahriman, from Persian roofs; Witches and conjurers, with horns and hoofs; Goblins and wraiths, from the pale moon afar, (A few, perchance, e'en from the evening star;) While shades and imps, dire spooks and changing shapes,

Ravens and owls, toads, snakes, bats, wolves and apes;

On rafters, shelves and posts, did stand or sit, Or shuttle-like, half-seen, among the throngs did flit.

Awful the greediness with which they fed, And vile the messes on the table spread. Corpses for meat, and bitter barks for bread; With dishes here and there of tigers' cubs. Hell broths for drinks, salads of magic shrubs; Their desserts, flesh of babes and suckling doves, With Dead Sea fruits, and galls from Stygian groves,

Washed down with Christian blood, and wine of cloves:

While hearts and tongues, eyes, ears and things obscene,

As dainties extra choice, were eaten oft between.

At last was heard a raven's startling croak,
And from a lofty perch thus plain he spoke:
"The raven king am I, by Odin sworn,
Where'er they be, in all the universe,
To bring to early death each son that's born
To Legion's house, pursuant to her curse
Whose son by the first Legion erst was slain,
While raged that battle dire at Baldurbane.
Legion, the last, from out my sight has gone,
And somewhere plays, no doubt, the part of champion.

"But whither gone, or why, I cannot tell.
From feelings bad I fear that deadly spell
Which hitherto his mighty sires did blight,
Has been annulled by some superior might.
If any know where now he doth sojourn—"
Without waiting aught furthermore to learn,
Outspake a hag from far Jerusalem,
Saying Legion was there, the Turks to stem,
Doing the deeds that Christian hearts delight,
His mascot, and his charm, a sea dove wholly
white.

Then ecstasy gleamed in that raven's eye. "I'll conquer yet," he said; "or trying die.

And if that dove again comes in my sight,
I'll catch and rend it, like a hungry kite."
Then spreading wide his wings away did fly.
Towards Jerusalem his course he sped
Hoping full soon to croak o'er Legion's head,
And on that dove to wreak the vengeance dire,
Which his strong oath to Odin did require;
Saying within his heart, as on he went,
His task he'd never stay till life was spent.
Just then afar was heard a cock's shrill crow,
And quicker than a flash, away those fiends did go.

Acting as though, somehow, that Angel's thrall, Upon a crag, on that Walpurgis-night, The eagle roosted, high above the hall; And when that raven croaked its awful spite He quick resolved its mission to forestall, And to far Palestine, he sped with swiftest flight.

CANTO 3

THE DOVE AND THE LOCKET

A jeweler of old Jerusalem,

Peddling fine trinkets 'mong the Christian knights,

Of silver, gold, and many a brilliant gem, (Some that had charms for good, and some for blights,) To Legion showed a locket like a heart,
Of gold and gems, small as an orange seed.
A marvel 'twas of goldsmith's skill and art,
And characters contained, that lovers well could read.

The locket opened and disclosed within
A beauteous amethyst, emblem of love,
And piece of parchment, white and very thin,
All deftly folded in a small alcove.
"On this a little message you can write,
And to your dear one send by carrier dove";
The peddler said; "and such their speed of flight,
A thousand miles, and more, they'll travel in a
night."

Legion resolved to make experiment,
And so the locket bought, and silken thread;
Then with them hastened to his near-by tent,
Where on the parchment wrote he to the Maid,
In words all short and small, and very few:

"Margie, my love, I'm at Jerusalem,
But soon will leave to hasten unto you.
I yearn to kiss your garment's lowest hem,
And my devotion tell. Legion, your lover true."

A white sea dove his person seemed to haunt, Where'er he went, whether on land or sea; And nothing seemed its confidence to daunt, For always perched it near, on rock or tree. Setting a trap this white sea dove he caught, Aiming to tie the locket 'neath its wing; For somehow there had come to him the thought That it was Margie's bird, with him a-wandering.

Holding the dove all gently in his hand These words he sadly uttered in its ear, As though, should it e'er reach fair Margie's land, It would forthwith repeat them all to her:

LEGION'S MESSAGE BY THE DOVE

"Oh, white sea dove, oh, white sea dove, Be thou my messenger, To bear this locket to my love, Which shows I hold her dear.

"May some kind spirit guide thy flight To island Redenfayn; And aid thee in her view to light And leave this locket plain.

"Tell her this locket I have kissed As though her heart it was. Within she'll find an amethyst To plead my loving cause.

"Tell her that seed of gentle love, She planted in my breast, Has grown to be a banyan grove And all my heart possessed. "Tell her the Paynim hosts we fought Christ's sepulcher to win, And by God's help we victory wrought And raised the Cross within.

"Tell her the moment I'm set free
From all that binds me here,
I'll haste away, o'er land and sea,
To Redenfayn, so dear.

"Oh, had I wings, sweet dove, like thee,
Quick would I stretch them wide;
And flying swift o'er land and sea
This day be at her side.

"A gentle spirit sure thou art,

Come to me from the skies;

Then go, sweet dove, and take this heart

To her I idolize."

Just as these last words Legion sadly spoke, High in the sky he heard that raven croak. "Croak on, oh, raven vile; your power's gone," He said; "by prayer annulled through Father John.

Now you and all your conjury I defy!
From that crazed mother's curse I'll never die.
My brother eagle, brave, will slay you in the sky."

When he the shining locket now produced,
The bird forthwith did gulp it down its throat,
And itself by a sudden struggle loosed;
Then quick and high into the sky did float.
Northwest the sea dove seemed to speed its way,
And soon was wholly lost to Legion's view,
While following, that raven swiftly flew.
And never there, after that noted day,
Saw he that dove, or to it got a clue:
Nor could he hope that locket 'twould convey,—
Unless his eagle brave, the raven did pursue.

Soaring around the sun, near Heaven's gate,
That eagle high the whole earth closely scanned;
And when he saw that Stygian bird of hate
Chasing the dove over both sea and land,
Inspired somehow, as by that Angel's call,
Adown the sky like shaft of light he sped,
Sworn in his heart the raven to forestall,
And save that shining dove, which swift before it
fled.

Upon the Leaves were many pictures bright,
Which did prefigure true love's victory;
And felt the Scribe a thrill of pure delight
That in love's favor fate had made decree.
Reading all slow the mystic Leaves between,
Somehow they seemed to hint of Yndafrene,
(To whom a letter plain he just had sent
To let her know with grief his heart was rent.)

The picture that to him gave greatest joy, An eagle bright that did a raven black destroy.

CANTO 4

VISION OF THE ELFIN QUEEN

The campaign now in glorious triumph closed,
Legion did feel he had fulfilled his vow,
And happy on a humble couch reposed,
The holy seal of honor on his brow.
No need for other deeds of fame to search,
His body, mind and soul of loads relieved,
At peace with God, in favor with the Church,
And deeply grateful for the blessings he'd received.

With a deep sigh, such as a reaper heaves,
When weary he reclines upon his sheaves,
Legion his eyes did close; but very soon
The wings of thought his heart and soul did bear
Unto the ocean isle and Maiden fair.
A pang he felt as far his reveries run;
He'd sinned perchance 'gainst her and her great
Sire,

To whom so much he owed and nought had done; And trembling he did fear some holy vengeful ire.

He thought he heard the coo of mourning dove; That locket's weight seemed heavier than a ton; And Margie's hair within did seem to move:
Then once again his conscience did reprove,
Because away from her so far he'd gone.
A single hair from head of lady love
The heart doth draw as draws the tides the sun:
Strong as a cable is its magic tie,
Let blow what tempests may, or roll what billows high.

Whether he slept and dreamed, or waked and mused,

It mattered not. Strange lands and stranger sights

Appeared: a forest, with great boughs confused,
And hung with heavy vines all lowly draped,—
The home of fairies, sylphs and elfin sprites,
Where even common things seemed all misshaped.
Silence ghostly and sad supremely reigned,
All things as motionless as though in swoon.
A lonely lake a lonely isle contained,
Asleep beneath the stars, and the low crescent
moon.

A scene it was to fascinate the sight:

Exceeding clear the sky and calm the night,

And smooth but deep the lilied lake appeared;

On trees and rocks around in darkest shades,

A fit retreat for fiends and renegades,

Perched big-eyed owls looking so wise and weird,—

And enigmatical. A pearl canoe,
Of perfect symmetry and witching grace,
That seemed the crescent moon, such was its hue,
Upon this lake did float as in the sky:
So mirror-like and still the water's face
It seemed the heavens above, only to amplify.

Within this pearl canoe an elfin queen,
In silken gauze all daintily arrayed,
Her shining form within distinctly seen.
Around her neck a wreath of flowers, made
Of tiny opals, pearls and fairy gems
That greatly would adorn earth's costliest diadems.

Over this crystal boat a sea dove white In circles flew, then on its prow did light. With jeweled hand the elfin queen then sprayed Witch-hazel leaves upon the white sea bird, Her hand waved high, and spoke a magic word; When lo, changed was the dove into a maid. Again her wand waved high the elfin queen; A magic word she spoke like tinkling bell,—And lo, the ocean isle all plain was seen! Then came a song, tender, plaintive and low, Forth from whose lips by nothing could he tell, Perchance that Angel's,—but, who this can ever know?

THE ANGEL'S SEA DOVE SONG

"Upon a little isle

A white sea dove;

Then Love came with a smile,

Like skies above.

"The sea dove's heart he won, Nor long did woo; But now, alas! he's gone— He was not true.

"She sits on yonder cliff,

Looking afar,

To where her lover's skiff

Set like a star.

"Woe to the lover, woe,
On land or sea!
Who laid the sea dove low,
And far did flee.

"No ban will lifted be From him, though brave, Who heeds not love's decree, His maid to save.

"Who from true love doth rove, Though on Crusade, Forgets that God is love, Leaves debt unpaid." Then ceased the song; and lo, upon the cliff, The Maid, looking in tears across the sea;—Upon her face the autograph of grief; A picture sad, but true, of love's fidelity.

And when the Scribe this picture sad had seen,
Suggestion came that it was Yndafrene.
Then in his soul his passion fierce did burn,
While towards her island home his face in tears
did turn.

CANTO 5

LEGION PREPARES TO LEAVE JERUSALEM

As swells at times the ocean's level breast,
And up from lowest depths a bubble comes,
With awful groan, as though from pain expressed,

Or deep below had burst a hundred bombs,
So Legion's bosom heaved in agony,
And from his soul came up a woful groan,—
He did so long the island Maid to see,
And felt in full what 'twas to be alone
When far one's heart is drawn by love's supreme
decree.

"Of every pleasure Margie is the fount," He mused; "and all of beauty in her eyes. Had I my will a chariot would I mount, With steeds fleet-footed as the shafts of light, And straight to Redenfavn across the skies, Like a swift meteor would I take my flight, Surpassing all creation's travel-score; And she beside me thence would speed above To Paradise, and there live evermore,-All happy in her sight, her beauty and her love.

"With her compared all else is nothingness, And when from her I turn I only err; But in my selfish schemes to win success, Have her neglected and her valiant Sire. Perhaps they're dead,—and I their murderer! If so, can I escape a just God's righteous ire?"

This thought so keenly stung him up he rose, And forthwith hurried to the Emperor: Release he begged now that to happy close The Christian hosts had brought their holy war, Jerusalem again in Christian hands, The Cross supreme o'er all the holy lands, And need no further now for sword and spear. "Most cheerfully," he said, "your wish I grant. Unto your King and country greetings bear From me and all my host. You've helped me plant

The Cross of Christ here, where, I to the Church did swear.

"Bravely you've fought to win for Church and me
The Holy City and the Tomb of Christ;
Hero you've been, alike on land and sea,
And blood and sweat and treasure sacrificed,
And would no payment take, nor meed request.
Unto your King my chancellor will send
A missive in my name, all fitly penned,
And your most noble deeds in full attest;

And now upon your head, may Heaven's blessings
rest!"

Now, war and knightly duties cast aside,
To Margie and her Sire turned Legion's thought;
Their little island in the ocean wide,
That once did seem to him a very nought,
Seemed now, indeed, a very Paradise;
And Margie's love, that once failed to entice,
Now was the only thing, that in this world he sought.

So filled with joy was Legion at the thought That he, at last, would soon be with the Maid, That into wildest transports he was wrought; And frenzied desperation he displayed At anything that savored of delay,—So wildly anxious he, at once to get away.

"Were I required some mighty deed to do," Cried he, "ere I could touch my Margie's hand,—As sail the Maelstrom's awful waters through, Or monstrous dragons fight on sea or land,

Huge behemoth or strong leviathan;
In Viking boat to cross the midnight seas;
Some great task do not done by modern man,
Such as was wrought of old by Hercules,
Or by the Norseman hero, mighty Thor,—
Battling with giants on fierce fields of war;—
All these, and more, at once I'd undertake,
With eager, happy heart for her dear sake.
So all resolved am I all risks to run,
And nothing great or small to leave undone,
That will my road to her, both short and certain
make."

In the Scribe's soul, loud did this canto ring
A thousand bells of joyous jubilee;
While pictured there an Eden-bird did sing,
Pouring its spirit out in ecstasy.
Then felt the Scribe most sure soon Yndafrene
he'd see.

CANTO 6

LEGION DEPARTS FOR REDENFAYN

With brightest hopes, and many plans of love, Legion departed,—gay as bird of spring, Bearing the Emperor's missive to his King,— Fame having won when not in search thereof. Joy winged his feet, and love his happy soul, As on he sped, all free from any chain; And like swift shafts of light unto their goal, His thoughts took wings westward to Redenfayn, The while his heart thus sung, with her for its refrain:

LEGION'S LAY OF LOVE

"Oh, she is sweet, and she is fair As angels bright above; Her eyes ago my soul did snare With lasting cords of love.

"Oh, sweet is sunshine to the rose,
And to the bird the air;
Sweet is the zephyr's breath to those
Whom burning fevers wear.

"Sweet to the thirsty earth are showers, And music to the ear; Sweet to the eye are fresh blown flowers, And sweet good news to hear.

"Sweet is fresh honey to the bee, And sweet peace after war; But sweeter far, than all these are, Is Margie's love to me.

"Oh, to her must I haste away,
My soul's in such distress;
No longer from her can I stay,
So great my wretchedness.

"My work in life seems all in vain Until she doth approve; So I must haste to Redenfayn To win her smile and love.

"And when on her my eyes do rest, And 'round her waist my arm, Then will I feel supremely blest, All thrilled by rapture's charm."

Legion's exploits during the great Crusade
From famed Jerusalem spread far and wide,
Through Christian and through Paynim lands
conveyed

By all who'd fought or served on either side;
And as were warriors there of every land,
And every color, race, tenet and tongue,
So Legion's name the whole earth brightly spanned,

The while his deeds, with praises loud were sung. Such was the honor Legion nobly won; Of all his mighty name the peerless paragon: And so upon a *leaf* in glory bright he shone.

On reaching Europe Father John he sought, Some news from Margie and her Sire to gain; (For she just then his one and only thought,) Resolved, her answer right, all else ignored, The King to see, and pardon full obtain For Strombold brave; and have to him restored His lands and serfs and offices entire,—
With help of Father John;—and then to land
On Redenfayn, this pardon in his hand,
And happy make the Maid, and her much honored Sire.

His race as Youth he'd run, and now began Another, and by far, a nobler man:
A Legion new, who did his past abhor.
Out from the brain of Jove Minerva sprang,
Full grown, and fully armed for deeds of war;
But here from Legion's self, without a clang,
Had sprung full grown a Legion greater far,
Full armed for deeds of peace, and acts of love,
In strength an eagle yet, but in his heart a dove.

Around its parent Sun still rolled afar
That little orb the Earth,—trusting in God;
With ocean's storms and billows still did war
That small isle, Redenfayn,—trusting in God;
On Redenfayn the Maiden still did live,
Trusting in God, and gazing o'er the sea:
Great hope did Legion's letter to her give,
And trust in God and it, maintained her energy.

In vain 'gainst God do men and demons fight,
For He, at last, will by His strong decree
All crooked things make straight, all wrongs
make right,

The Book of Repentance and Joys 367

Who is unjustly bound He will make free,
And do away with everything that harms.
For Redenfayn fate a bright rainbow weaves;
All evil charms the charm of love outcharms.
That Angel was at work: so read the Myrtle
Leaves.



CHAPTER IV

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT

PROEM

Strombold at last triumphs over his adversaries. Legion and Father John obtain his pardon from the King, with full restitution of his estates. In the meantime the Maid is sustained by hope, and premonitions that Legion will soon return, that Angel aiding her. The dove, having escaped the raven by aid of the eagle, delivers the locket sent by Legion from Jerusalem; and the Scribe sees light ahead.



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CANTO 1

STROMBOLD'S VINDICATION NEAR

There is a wind, that comes from frozen fields, And with a blizzard's power destruction wields; There is a wind, with plagues upon its wings, That woe and death unto earth's millions brings; There is a wind, that does from deserts blow So hot it burns to death all things that grow; There is a wind, that tears up sea and land, Nor fleets nor forests can its wrath withstand: In all these winds, the awful thunder-roll, And dreadful lightning-flash, strike terror to the soul.

But there's a wind, more dreadful than they all,
On every land and clime its blights do fall,
Nor can it be kept off, though high the wall.
From slander's throat it comes, a whispering breath,

That's barely heard, and never felt nor seen,
And yet it chills the beautiful to death,
Be she a peasant maid, or virgin queen.
The noble, pure and true, it withereth,
It blasts all fame, and mars all happiness,
And makes those curse who otherwise would bless;
'Tis everywhere, against it there's no shield,
And whom it once doth strike, is never wholly healed.

But they who such winds sow shall whirlwinds reap;

They who make others sigh themselves shall weep; And they who draw the sword shall feel its blow. Justice though blind, and often deaf and slow, Yet ever follows on wrong's guilty trail, And soon or late the culprit will impale; And as dire warning both to old and young, Slander is gibbeted, suspended by its tongue.

Oh, Strombold, brave and true, Justice your friend

And Love his fair ally, their forces all Both far and near, are rallying to defend, To loose your guiltless soul from every thrall, And most triumphant vindication bring. Long have you borne the shame of exile's brand, And long have felt the pain of slander's sting, But now the noon of Justice is at hand, And soon the bells of joy your jubilee will ring!

The fabrication of that slander-blight,
By jealousy conceived, and carried out
By aid of hate, now comes into the light;
And light puts fraud and slander e'er to rout,
But certain victory is for truth and right.
All evil charms the charm of love outcharms,
And of their wicked spells, all fiends and foes disarms.

A picture here, in colors glorious,
Showed Strombold o'er his foes victorious;
Justice untied, and right upon the throne;
While love and truth, at last, had come unto their own.

Happy was Legion Father John to find, ('Twas him he'd met when for false fame he pined,)

But happier far to get the Maid's response.

The faithful messenger he warmly thanked,
And gladly gave rich recompense at once.

That day in joy to him by far outranked
All he had known since from the isle he'd erred.

Thrice and again her answer did he read,
His eyes in bliss did on the writing feed,
Its every line he kissed and every word,
While tears and smiles over his face did run,
Like rain in happy May, when brightly shines
the sun.

"Oh, Margie dear, what griefs I've caused your heart!

And caused mine own! all without recompense. Forthwith unto the palace I'll depart, With Father John, and prove the innocence Of your brave Sire;—and then to you I'll start.

Oh, day of bliss, when round your form divine, My happy arms in ecstasy I'll twine, And call you darling, mine, mine own, forever mine."

So Legion thought aloud, his joy so great:
A new life was in front, and bright its gate.
No more a youth with many whimseys wild:
With hard experience had his mind been charged,
His love for fame forever he'd exiled,
And to full manhood was he now enlarged.
No more the Legion raving 'bout his name,
Fired by ambition, all intent on fame,
And glory ranking all things else above;
But a new Legion, pledged to deeds of love,
Who'd exchanged selfish strifes for brotherhood,
And eager nought to do, but only what was good:
So had that Angel quelled the virus in his blood.

CANTO 2

STROMBOLD'S HONORS AND ESTATES RESTORED

Legion all matters now was hastening:
Within the royal palace he did stand
Awaiting private audience with the King,
While all around were great men of the land.
Into the Hall of State invited soon,
Kindly the King received him, took his hand,

His brave deeds praised and eulogized his Sire. "For Legion's son what can I do?" he asked. "Your Majesty, I come to pray a boon; Two favors at your hand I do desire," Promptly that son replied, and then his heart unmasked.

His shipwreck on the island Redenfayn
Briefly he told, where Strombold he had found,
His daughter and one serf his total train;
Told how his life she'd saved when nearly
drowned,

How gratitude did much his heart inspire; And how by chance, with Father John he'd met, Who had with Strombold nursed his wounded sire, Till on his noble brow, pale death its seal had set.

"Now, my requests are these, your Majesty,"
Said Legion: "that my stay at Redenfayn
You will forgive; and if your monarchy
Will suffer not, remove brave Strombold's stain,
And all his honors and estates revive:
This I most humbly beg, and pledge my head
You will not suffer loss." "Strombold alive?"
Exclaimed the King. "I long had thought him
dead,

Or years ago I would have justice done, And his estates and honors all returned. That he was innocent, as Father John So truthfully has told, I long ago had learned. "Yes, yes, my son, your two requests I grant,
And all I've done to Strombold will recant,—
Gladly recant. Go, bring the hero back;
The fullest reinstatement I accord;
Of Fedmer Fief again he is the lord,
And in my favor he shall nothing lack.
For all the wrongs done him I pardon beg,
(To me and to the queen they've been a plague.)
The proper writings I'll at once have made,
And to your quarters speedily conveyed.
Now go to Redenfayn, and make report,
And all of you erelong, I hope to see at Court."

"Ten thousand grateful thanks, your Majesty! Yours are my life, my fortune and my spear!" Legion exclaimed with heart of ecstasy.

"And, please your Majesty, a missive here For you I have from the great Emperor, Signed at Jerusalem." "What!" cried the King, With eyes a-stare and lips a-quivering, As Legion from the scroll the wrappings tore, Showing the imperial seal and ribboned nicks; While Father John kneeled humbly on the floor, Crossed thrice his brow and heart, and kissed his crucifix.

"Crusader thou, and all to us unknown?" Exclaimed the King in loud but trembling tone. With knightly dignity low Legion bowed, But modestly an answer did withhold.

Breaking the parchment's seals the King aloud Its contents read. Of Legion's worth it told, How in all things himself he'd sacrificed, Declaring that his time, talents and blood, Not unto him belonged, but unto Christ; And any pay for doing duty would Defile the deed e'en worse than simony, And turn his honor high, to basest infamy.

While read the King Legion his head bowed low, His breath all weak, his face with red aglow, Deeply ashamed to hear such eulogy. Then Legion's hand again the King did take, Praising his valor and his piety, And bidding him occasion soon to make, To come and tell in full, his crusade's history.

Meanwhile good Father John, his soul o'erwrought,

His cross did kiss, his rosary did read,
His heart he signed, and mumbled o'er his creed,
Deeming the man who had in crusade fought,
Who'd water drank from David's holy spring,
And helped Christ's sacred sepulcher to win,
Great as a saint, and greater than a king,—
A holy knight indeed, all free from taint of sin.

And when by chance he saw beneath his cloak Legion's bright cross of gold and scallop shell, Into more prayers his pious spirit broke, And once again his rosewood beads did tell; For those were holy signs, that reverence did invoke.

CANTO 3

HOPE SUSTAINS THE MAID

High over all watched God's great loving eyes, Guarding the earth as king his citadel. Beneath the sheen of spring's most gentle skies, The island Redenfayn, in ocean's arms By loving billows rocked, lay cradled well, The tender winds singing their lullabies; While land and sea alike were free from harms. Nearer to heaven the earth did seem to dwell, And further from old hate, and all its dire alarms.

High on that lofty cliff, for eagles fit,
Where he so oft did love to stand or sit,
And gazing muse on love, and destiny,
There sat the Maid, looking upon the sea,
Towards the east, where bright the sun did rise;
With her thin slender hands shading her eyes,
All dim with tears, hoping for his return;
While in her loving heart, some conjury seemed to burn.

"How wide the ocean and how far the sky! Oh, that the earth were not so limitless,

That I might take it all within my eye! Then would I truly know where Legion is," The Maiden said; then added with a sigh, "But as it is, ah me, I cannot even guess.

"How sweet that breeze to fondle with my hair, And o'er my fevered face to gently stroll! Perchance within this breeze some spirit fair Doth come to pity me, and soothe my soul. Oh, list! how sweet it sings,—and tenderly, As shells of pearl sing of the silver sea, Or evening stars chant to the summer sky. How kind in God to make the breeze here dwell! If thus so kind, my prayer will He deny, And keep far from me him whom I do love so well?

"Oh, hark! he comes, and—no! His step so dear I thought I heard treading within my ear,— As he upon me once did creep of yore.

A feeling have I somehow that he's nigh.
In dreams last night I met him on the shore.
Oh, Legion, thou, my joy, and very life,
Surely thou'lt not leave me of grief to die!
Dead can he be, sleeping down in the deep?
Did I one moment think him not alive,
Right here and now I'd end my soul's sad strife,—
And in the sea I'd leap, happy with him to sleep."

Within her hands she hid her face, and wept,—An awful agony deep in her soul.

Then gently near that gracious Angel crept,
And soothingly did with her heart condole.

"Oh, could my feet upon the waves but walk,
Or on the winds could my frail body fly,
As does a snipe of land, or ocean hawk,
Through all the world I'd wander, far and wide,
In every hole and corner would I pry,
Wherein some cruel fate his form might hide;
And of all men inquire till him I'd found.
Then happy as a saint, within my arms,
All tight and strong I'd clasp his body round,
And farewell bidding unto all alarms,
Unto his lips my own all greedy press
Till all my soul had gone deep into his,
And I were naught, at all, but ecstasy of bliss."

"But oh, so little does my memory hold Wherewith my hungry heart and soul to feed! Had he but been a little trifle bold! But to my face a moment touched his cheek, Or done some other small but loving deed,—Then something would I have on which to live. Strange that of love to me he ne'er did speak, And that no token he to me did ever give!

"But why should I have doubts? His letter shows He loves me well,—'tis in my bosom here. My love is greedy, and its hunger grows The more of him I think: he is so dear. Oh, what a bliss to meet in one embrace

Legion and Many, two with but one face. If I had strength, through all eternity I'd suffer sorest grief, for such an ecstasy.

"Christians are buried facing to the east, Ready their Lord to greet when he returns; For there we're told by bishop, monk and priest, Christ as the Dayspring evermore sojourns. So, if I die, out of my graveyard bed I'll eastward watch to see my Legion come; For come he will e'en though I long be dead. Then as a flower I'll blossom on my tomb. For welcome him I will, although my lips be dumb."

Soon as the scribe this canto did translate, And all the pictures scan, he was elate; For in his soul he felt the smile of fate. And when came thoughts of saintly Yndafrene, The clouded skies of love began to grow serene.

CANTO 4

THE DOVE DELIVERS THE LOCKET

"Where is my darling dove?" she sadly said. "Its body I've not seen, nor heard its coo For weeks and weeks. I pray it is not dead, For that my spirit wholly would undo. Its lovely form, sweet looks and tender voice, For many months have been a comfort dear; And oft have made my grieving heart rejoice When nought else was at hand, my waiting soul to cheer.

"Did I my secret hope dare to express
'Twould be that it had flown to Legion's tent,
Where'er it be in earth's wide wilderness,
To tell him that my life was almost spent,
And bring from him some word, for my encouragement.

"Lo, now a speck I see, far in the east,
That like a dove flies swiftly through the air.
Thither it seems to come as though in haste.
Oh, no, it cannot be! I would not dare
To think it was my dove from Legion come,
Bringing some message sweet, to drive away my
gloom."

Chasing the dove a raven slow did fly,
By eagle wounded in the upper sky;
But now its wings did droop, and down it fell,
Croaking all feebly forth its funeral knell;
Whereat that eagle gave a happy cry.
Meanwhile the dove straight unto Margie flew.
"And here it is," said she, "my dove so true.
So glad am I, sweet bird, that you do live;
Though weary seem you, like a fugitive.
Come to me, sweet, and let me comfort you."

Into her hands the dove she gently took; Whereat, as though in joy, it gave a coo; And then its eyes put on a soft, contented look.

"Oh, darling dove," she said, "you bring me joy! Where have you been, oh, these long dismal days? I feared that raven vile might you destroy, And oh, the thought my soul did almost craze;-But now you're back again, the saints I praise. Bring you no message from my Legion's land?" Just then the sea-dove opened wide its wings, And most erect upon its feet did stand, With bendings of its neck, and flutterings;-When all at once right in the Maiden's hand, The golden locket it disgorged,-all bright As in Jerusalem, it first did come to light.

Startled, amazed, delighted, beyond speech, Nought for a while the Maid could do but gaze. Perplexed to know what lesson it did teach, Her thoughts went to and fro in murky maze. She looked and looked, and long did nought but look,

Afraid to touch it, lest it prove a dream. All judgment for awhile her mind forsook; For nought knew she of that good Angel's scheme.

With gentle coo the dove then flew away, To forage for some food, its hunger to allay. The locket then she oped, and saw within The amethyst, emblem of perfect love; There, too, the parchment white and very thin, All folded deftly in the small alcove. Then nervously she Legion's message read. "'Legion, your lover true," she, quoting, said. "Oh, precious words! He's at Jerusalem, But soon will leave to hasten unto me. He says he yearns to kiss my garment's hem, And tell me of his love, and firm fidelity.

"What further could he say his love to show? Yet could I sit and read from morn to night His words of love, and never weary grow, Nor cease to feel sweet thrills of pure delight. Now do I know that he will soon be here. And so from out my heart I'll cast all fear. He's been a soldier of the Holy Cross, So God will guard him well 'gainst every loss, And help him back all safe to Redenfayn, When in his loving eyes, I'll look with joy again."

When this the Scribe had read, upon a Leaf He picture saw of a fair Maid in grief, And dove with letter, by her side just lit. Then in his soul was born the sure belief That Yndafrene did get that letter plain he'd writ.

CHAPTER V

LEGION RETURNS TO REDENFAYN

PROEM

With the dawning of a bright day, joy returns to Redenfayn, and all sorrows disappear. The Maid is happy in her faith that Legion will soon return. She sees him coming in her dreams. Legion, too, was in ecstasy at the thought of soon seeing her: both voice their feelings in song. Who saileth east some day will return: Legion returns, and full of bliss is their re-union. Legion presents to Strombold the King's grant of full pardon, and complete restoration of all his lands, serfs, titles and commands. The great joy of all three is described. The mystic pictures show the Scribe drawing near to Yndafrene.

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CANTO 1

THE MAID'S HAPPY FAITH

The day had just been born; the mother-dew Upon its tender rosy form still shone. The sun, its sire, his head upreared to view His latest born, and mark it as his own. Its natal hymn the morning star did sing, In strains of silvery beams through skies so blue. With beaks upraised in welcome of the spring, The birds from flower-cups drank honey-brew; And from glad throats poured o'er the argent sea Their many merry strains of light-heart minstrelsy.

A morn it was fit for a bridal day,
Or for a festival in merry May,
Or for the crowning of the people's king,
Or for the happy day of Jubilee,
Or for a saint to Heaven her way to wing;
Or for the day of perfect liberty;
Or for the coming of the blessed Christ
To usher in his thousand years of peace,
Wherein naught good will e'er be sacrificed,
And from all want and woe, mankind have full
release.

Charmed by the birds and light, slow as a snail Up through the Maiden's soul came wakefulness; And with soft fingers raised her lids so pale, That she the day might see that ended her distress.

"Oh, what a lovely morn!" waking she mused.
"How soft the air! how sweet my sea dove's coo!
New life I feel through all my limbs diffused;
And I will rise the eastern waves to view.
For such a dream did come last night to me!
"Him plain I saw; plain him, and plain his boat,—

As plain as though right there I saw it float, Hither sailing across the smiling sea. Upon his face a look of love he wore. To me his hands he held and seemed to say: 'I m come with you to live, in bliss forevermore.'"

Then from her window forth she cast her sight Out on the world, which was but sky and sea, Her face illumined by her soul's delight, As vase of pearl shining transparently. "Yes, bright it is," she said: "happy I feel. Surely these omens some great joy forecast, Which time, no doubt, will very soon reveal, And then my grief will be forever past." Then lay she down, and dreamed again of love, And soft as mother's arms did seem her bed. That Angel was at work: the Leaves so read; And overhead again, low cooed the white sea dove.

Her faith such substance had that he was near—As much as though she'd seen him with her eyes: Her perfect faith had cast out every fear. With grief no more her soul did agonize. So full her heart with joy it overflowed, And in soft tones she hummed this simple loving ode:

MARGIE'S SONG OF FAITH

"Who saileth east will come again Across the shining sea; Love's of all lands a citizen, So everywhere is he;

"Let billows roll, let tempests blow,
Despite the wind and sea,
If true love in his heart doth glow
Back will he come to me.

"So true his love he'll never fail,
While life doth with him stay;
Back o'er the ocean will he sail,
Be it by night or day.

"And soon he'll come! oh, soon he'll come!
So says my sea dove true;
I know it by her placid plume,
I know it by her coo.

"Deep in my heart some Angel is That tells me he is near, That stored for me are ecstasies, When he, my love, is here."

Long months elapsed, since first the *Leaves* were read,

Ere all their words were on these pages spread;—Delay's strong hand so oft did intervene.
But while the Scribe did on this canto write,
Oh, joy! an answer came from Yndafrene,—
As full of words of love as heaven is full of light.

CANTO 2

LEGION IN ECSTASY

While thus on Legion was the Maiden's mind
She in his soul was lovingly enshrined,
And all his thoughts with her as in a dream.
The more he thought the fairer did she seem,
And as her beauty grew his passion flamed,
Till into words his ecstasies he framed.
While so enraptured, she his blooming theme,
And not one thought from her going astray,
Thus did his glowing heart her grace and charms
portray:

LOVE'S TRIBUTE TO BEAUTY

"Oh, fairer she than any skies,
Than flowers, stars or diadems;
All Heaven is centered in her eyes,
Like purest gold encircling gems.

"No frenzied young Varangian brave Rejoicing in the battle's storm, E'er saw, 'tween Heaven and his grave, Valkyrie of so fair a form.

"No Viking sailing o'er the sea,
With golden spoil of Spain, or Rome,
E'er saw in dream of ecstasy
A fairer maid to greet him home.

"No Troubadour of sunny France,
His fancy all aflame with love,
E'er saw in realms of bright romance
One fairer than this white sea dove.

"No Persian bard by beauty fired, In spirit viewing Paradise, E'er Peri saw when most inspired, With lovelier face or sweeter eyes.

No Christian knight, to virtue vowed,
While battling for the Tomb of Christ,
E'er saw an angel fairer browed,
When in his dreams imparadised.

"Yes, she is fair beyond compare,
And good and loving as she's sweet;
My soul is tangled in her hair,
My heart doth worship at her feet.

"Oh, for swift wings to fly to her,
That I her darling lips may kiss;
At her shrine be idolater,
My spirit thrilled with perfect bliss!"

Of all the pictures that the Scribe had seen, None were so fair, so very exquisite, None seemed so dreamlike in their mystic sheen, None did such thrilling influence emit, As those that were these verses bright within. The portraits all were Margie's counterfeit, And yet resemblance bore to lovely Yndafrene.

Who doubts that perfect love's omnipotent
Let him but think of Legion, young and brave,
Almost of royal blood, on glory bent,
Already high on honor's shining wave,
Crowned with a holy fame in Crusade won,
Greatly in favor with the Emperor,
Esteemed fair lady's foremost champion,
Versed in the arts of peace as well as war,
His future bright and high, as glowing midday
sun;—

Behold him leave sacred Jerusalem,
Spurn every honor in which men take pride,
As though earth's fame his spirit did contemn,
And almost lone across the world to ride,
O'er mountains, deserts, plains, rivers and seas,
With obstacles most dire on every side,
And almost everywhere, malignant enemies;—

To reach what mighty realm, or famous town? Merely a little, rocky, ocean, isle!

To win what royal wealth, or great renown?

Merely to hear a voice, and see a smile!

Of what princess, or goddess, nonpareil?

Of a mere exile's child, he landless, out and down!

And why put her all precious boons above?

Merely for sake of love! merely for sake of love!

CANTO 3

LEGION MEETS THE MAID

Who saileth east some day again will come. A white sail gleams afar: Legion returns! His happy heart loud beats the onward drum. Her isle he sees: oh, how his bosom burns! No ocean bloom was ever half so bright; An Eden fair, embosomed by the sea, It seems far off a castle of delight, Protected by the charm of love's supreme decree.

At the boat's prow stands hope, joy at the helm, A shining myrtle wreath its pennant bore, Its captain love going to rule his realm, Its port the heart that waits him on the shore, No plummet does he need, compass or chart, No pilot, sign, guide-book nor polar star, The boat he steers not by his head, but heart, And in his soul all motive powers are;—No winds nor tides he needs, but lets them play their part.

All merrily the gentle zephyrs sing,
About the boat the wavelets laughing play,
A white sea dove unto the mast doth cling,
The swans unscared swim leisurely away,
A halcyon hovers o'er the neighboring main;
But nought doth Legion see save Redenfayn;
To him that isle is all, and everything,
A blossom dropped from Heaven for a king,
That in its holy heart, an angel doth contain.

Swift o'er the waters glides the happy boat;
But slow seems it to him. With wish and will
He fain would like an arrow make it shoot.
Though scudding fast, to him 'twas standing still,
His thoughts so rampant and so resolute.
The cliff, the shore, the grove, his eye surveys;
Each well known haunt his vision penetrates.
Her he sees not, though eager is his gaze.

Pale grows his cheek, his heart feels heavy weights;

His soul with awful fears is all unmanned. The shore is reached: he leaps upon the sand, All wild, nor thought to cast his anchor on the strand.

Awful the stillness, and so ominous: No sign of Margie shone along the coast. Upon his heart did rest an incubus. Her name he called: "Margie! oh, Margie, dear!" A lonely echo answered like a ghost; And winds went sighing by. "Oh, I do fear! Too late?" he thought: awful his agony! A withering dread his very soul did sear. Towards the cave he bounded franticly, At every step calling, "Oh, Margie, dear!" Out from his heart the dove of hope had flown; And on black wings was flapping loud and near The raven of despair. His soul did groan; And as his spirit writhed in deadly pain, "Is this," thought he, "a bolt from bloody Baldurbane?"

"Who calls for Margie?" asked a friendly voice: It was the Sire's. "Is she alive?" half crazed Legion inquired, not sure he could rejoice, And by the incidents breathless and dazed. "She is,-but sick," he said: "Legion your name?" "Yes, Sire, I'm Legion come to see the Maid,-

And you—you both?" "Most glad am I you came;

But out here stay awhile, for I'm afraid
Too frail is she such sudden shock to stand;
Meanwhile most glad am I to greet you with
my hand."

Shaking his hand the Sire quick turned away
Within the door, his daughter to acquaint.
Upon a couch in loose attire she lay,
Fragile and pale, yet like a very saint.
"My child," he kindly said, "a lovely day
This is to take a walk; 'twould do you good."
"I have been thinking so; perhaps it would,"
She faintly answered with a feeble smile.
"'Tis like the day I saw in last night's dream."
"What did you dream?" he asked, her to beguile.
"I dreamed of him," she said: "it all so plain did seem."

Then said the Sire, gently the news to break,
"A feeling have I, too, he'll soon be here."
"Oh, father, you my very breath do take:
I'll go with you across the sea to look;
If I were dead I'd rise to welcome him."
"A moment stay, my child; you're weak of limb,"
He said, somewhat perplexed right words to find.
"Oh, tell me all; suspense I cannot brook.
Has Legion come?" She'd read her father's mind.

"I think perhaps he has," the Sire replied. "Oh, father, what mean you? In plain words speak.

And tell me all you know," she quickly cried. "Let me go out and see; no longer am I weak."

"'Tis all, my child, exactly as you dreamed,-Legion has come!" "Then where is he, oh, where?"

In tones of agitation she exclaimed, While in her father's face her eyes did stare: So did her heart rebuff the least delay. "I can't believe until his face I see, And feel him with my hands. Oh, where is he? Come, go with me, or else show me the way;-I want sure certainty—without a doubt," She said in frenzy, while his arm she grasped. "Wait, and I'll bring him in," said he, and out He stepped. At once Legion the loved was there! A mutual cry of joy,—and both were clasped All lovingly in love's most loved embrace. Beatitude was reached, and every prayer Made good; all doubts removed, and nought but bliss had place.

Of love's seclusiveness considerate, (For well he knew how 'twas when lovers mate,) And not wishing their pleasure to abridge, The Sire walked out, leaving alone the two: For two love's sacred number is; and who.

Unwished, makes three or more, commits a sacrilege.

Then thought the Scribe sure picture there must be

Showing all bright Legion's felicity;

But none he found, though searched he every Leaf.

Then came a voice: "As paint can't picture grief, So never artist yet has joy portrayed.

Who pictures lovers' joys must Heaven itself invade."

CANTO 4

THE LOVERS' REUNION

The curtain's down, now love hath found his own. Of all the joys that human hearts have known Since Adam paired with Eve in Paradise,—
Love full and pure between two youthful souls, When naught outside molests, mars or controls, Gives most of ecstasy, and least of sacrifice.

The Maid had nought to say; herself to feel Wrapped in her lover's arms, her cheek 'gainst his,

An answer full to love's most fond appeal, The height supreme of all felicities. To know in fact that it was really he, All doubt dispelled by perfect certainty, This was a joy supreme, so pure and full, Its edge of bliss so keen, words did but only dull.

Her soul itself did wrap and twine 'round his, And his in turn did all reciprocate. Reached were the furthest bounds of ecstasies. Her mind content dreamed within Heaven's gate; The zenith of her spirit's ravishment,-A joy so perfect nought could it augment, The rounded circle of beatitude, And all that else might be, which was supremely good.

The touch of love doth love itself reveal, And loving touch all wounds of heart will heal. The soft caress of tender sympathy Revives the weary soul when near to die. The heart all starved for want of proper food Knows not the bliss wherewith love is endued. The food of love is love, and when a soul That deeply loves gets no love in return, 'Tis like an altar with no burning coal; There's nothing it can do, but hope, and pray,and yearn.

"Treason to him 'twould be for me to die, And leave him lone after he came to me. Were it not so, oh, what a bliss 'twould be Right now, as in his arms I sweetly lie, To pass from time unto eternity!"

Thus did she think as happy there she lay. So quick the swing of passion's pendulum, From depths of night to heights of perfect day, That, for a moment brief, her mind was overcome.

After her heart had grown somewhat serene, She looked into his face and deeply blushed That in a man's embrace she should be seen; And then aside one arm she gently pushed, Through maiden modesty thus sensitive.

"Yes, now I'll live," she said; "for you I'll live. I cannot die while you with me do stay. But had your darling letter never come, Oh, long ago I would have passed away. On it I've lived, a loaf,—yet but a crumb! Its words the flame of life did keep alive, Drove off despair e'en in the darkest day, And by its mighty help,—and prayer, I did survive."

Though while she spoke some trickling tears she shed,

Yet on his face her eyes all happy fed.
Striving her mind somewhat to moderate,
Back from his sunburned face his hair she
smoothed,

And with her fingers combed it half-way straight; While he with tender words, and soft caress, Her agitated spirit gently soothed;—
As down his cheeks did flow bright tears of happiness.

When full upon her face he turned his eyes,
And with a tender kiss said, "Dearest love,"
She smiled, but deeply blushed, all maidenwise;
While rapture infinite, like that above,
Her heart, and soul, and mind did all entrance.
As sudden flash lights up a darkened room,
Revealing all its beauties at a glance,
So those two words her spirit did illume,
And made her joy shine forth, in its most perfect
bloom.

When on the Leaves the Scribe this canto read, And saw the charming pictures on them spread, (The Maid and Youth drinking from love's sweet bowl,

He king of joy, and she his saintly queen),
Then sure conviction blossomed in his soul
That of love's bliss soon would he know the whole;
For in the mystic signs were plainly seen
His footsteps drawing near to those of Yndafrene.

CANTO 5

RESTITUTION DONE TO STROMBOLD

Fearing from Margie's side longer to stay, The Sire returned from visit to the shore. "Count Strombold, much I owe," Legion did say. "Call me not 'Count,'" quickly the Sire replied; "Count once I was, but Count I am no more. Below a serf's my honor's villified."

"But Count you are!" Loud Legion's words did ring.

"Full pardon have I brought you from the King, With restitution full of all your lands,
And all your serfs, your thanes, your honors and commands.—

"But it is in the boat. I hungered so
You all to see at once, I greatly fear
I failed to anchor it;—at once I'll go—"
"Be not disturbed!" quickly exclaimed the Sire;
"Your boat I've anchored, and your wallet's here."
"Oh, thanks! How thoughtful you and thoughtless I!"

"You did just right to show how in your eye
More precious we to you, than all the world beside."

With happy hands the wallet was untied,—
The parchment reached. "Count, here's the document,"

Legion exulting said; "unto you sent." Breaking the royal seal the Sire, with pride, The welcome words thus read:

"To Strombold, Count,
Of Fedmer Fief, lord and graf paramount:
Full pardon absolute to you I grant,
And restitution make of serfs and lands.
Unto this pardon gladly I annex
Return of all your titles and commands,
In full. Done by the King, Henricus, primus, Rex."

With cry of joy around her lover's neck
In ecstasy her arms the Maiden twined,
And kissed him rapturously upon his cheek,
Declaring oft that he of all mankind
Was dearest, best and most considerate.
Strombold, the Count, with many tears half blind,
And choking with emotion infinite,
Which he could not conceal, nor would make known,

Took Legion's hand with thanks, for the great service done.

"Count, I'm repaid, ten thousand times repaid,"
Legion replied, his arm around the Maid;
"Repaid by Margie's smiles and fortitude,
And by her love and care paid in advance.
Besides a debt writ in my father's blood
I owe you, Count, too great for utterance.
You owe me nought, in both your debts am I.
To me and mine you both have been so good,
Your debtor I'll remain until I die."
Then Strombold's hand he kissed, in love and
gratitude.

"Now take a rest, my child," advised the Sire, Taking her gently by her proffered hand; "Not strong enough are you longer to stand." Kissing her lover then she did retire, A saintly look about her face and eyes: No angel happier, in all of Paradise.

CHAPTER VI

LEGION, STROMBOLD, AND THE MAID

PROEM

Legion gives his history to the Count, who is rejoiced to know that he is the son of his great comrade-in-arms. The Count thereupon tells of Legion's valiant sire, how on his death-bed he repented of his ambition, and left a solemn charge for his son, which the Count then delivered. Legion shows his locket, and the Count recognizes the countenance of his old comrade and friend.

AT CHECKEN

WELL STEEL HEAT ATLANSIATE CHARACTER

SURFER

CANTO 1

LEGION GIVES HIS HISTORY TO THE COUNT

The Sire, the Maid and Legion, happy three, In bonds of mutual love and gratitude, Sat in the sunshine, looking on the sea,—
The minds of all in reminiscent mood, And quite disposed to be inquisitive.
"In brief my history I'll gladly give," Legion replied, when questioned by the Count, Whose curiosity to know was paramount.

"In Shonbirg was I born, and there I live."

"In Shonbirg? Well I know that ancient place,"
The Count put in with agitated face.

"A place of legend, myth and mystery,
With mighty moat, drawbridge and towered wall,
That figure in Varangian history.
Your father's name?" Legion at once replied,

"Legion his name, the Knight of Shonbirg Hall."

"Just as I thought!" the Count excited cried,
Eyeing the speaker and his features well,
And moving ever nearer to his side,
As though wholly beneath the might of some strange spell.

"You proved my father's true and valiant friend, When, wounded on the field of Wodenow, By swarms of foes beset and near his end,
Wounded on head, in body and in limb,
With scarcely strength to strike a stalwart blow,
While a fierce raven 'gainst him did contend.
By valor infinite you rescued him,
And from his foes his dying form did save:
Then nursed him to the end, and laid him in his
grave."

Here Legion groaned, o'ermastered by his woe.

"Most true, indeed! but who did tell you so?"

Inquired the Sire, his eyes all moist with tears.

"Battling for king and fame near Wodenow,

My body too was pierced by foeman's spears."

"Oh, Legion, were you hurt?" the Maid exclaimed,

Smoothing his hair, and gazing in his face Most tenderly. "Yes, somewhat; but not maimed,"

Legion softly replied, adding a slight embrace.

Then went he on, when he her hand released:
"To a rude hospital my form they bore,
Where Father John did me to health restore,
The very priest—" "Yes, yes, the very priest,"
The Count did interpose; "who years before
So kindly helped me your brave father nurse."
"Yes, Father John was both my nurse and friend.
My father's valiant deeds he did rehearse,
From their beginning bright, unto their mournful end.

"But you, good Count, with all this not content, Unto my mother a kind letter sent, Describing father's every valiant deed, Forgetting not to praise his faithful steed, And all the wondrous things that each had done, Whereby such glorious fame he'd surely won; How ere he died he to the priest confessed, And was by him baptized, absolved and blessed; How he my mother did just idolize, And with last breath did pray, they'd meet beyond the skies."

Here Legion wept, and Strombold groaned in grief,

While Margie cried aloud, for some relief. Anon Legion his narrative resumed. "Among my sacred stores at Shonbirg Hall That letter rests, by mother's tears perfumed, Kept for her sake, my sire's, the Count's and all." "Father's so good and kind," exclaimed the Maid; "Gentle and true, ready the weak to aid; I've read the truly brave are ever good, Shielding the poor and weak, and guarding womanhood."

"And such your noble father truly is, No paladin, no knight of chivalry," Legion replied, with thrilling emphasis; "No prince nor emperor unparagoned, Whether in history or mythology,

In all that's grand did ever go beyond,
Was ever braver, nobler or more true
In all to friend or king or country due,
Or did on battle field more brightly shine,
Than brave Strombold your Sire, or mighty
Legion mine.

CANTO 2

LEGION TELLS OF HIS REPENTANCE

"At last fell from my eyes ambition's scales;
For paths of fame no longer did I care.
Careers of conquerors deemed as fairy tales,
And all the crowns of glory did forswear.
Then in a dream my sainted mother came,
And bade me win a heavenly diadem,
(For great in sight of saints did seem my blame,)
Showing all plain the road, towards Jerusalem.

"So forthwith did I join the great crusade
Under the banner of the Emperor,
Battling on land and sea, with spear and blade,
While he with many hosts did wage his war.
What all I did 'tis scarcely meet I say;
But so it was upon a happy day,
When all propitious were the heavenly fates,
We marched triumphant through great Zion's
gates,
And o'er the Holy Sepulcher of Christ

Did rear with psalms of joy the Holy Cross, And where the Son of God was sacrificed, There kneeled we all and prayed, and called earth's glories dross."

Here Strombold rose, as one in great amaze,
While Margie bowed in sacred reverence,
Nor did she for a while her head upraise,
(Her love and wonder for a time intense;)
But crossed her heart and counted o'er her
beads,—

So marvelous did seem her lover's mighty deeds.

"Then on a holy crusade you did go?"
Cried Strombold, when recovered from his awe.
"In truth," Legion replied; and then did draw
A cross of gems and gold, which he did show,—
Presented him by the great Emperor.
Then up rose Margie, and thrice kissed his hand;
For one who'd battled in a crusade war,
And fought the Paynim for the Holy Land,
Unto Jerusalem had borne the Rood,
And by Christ's sacred sepulcher had stood,
(Thus doing what was deemed the holiest thing,)
Was ranked good as a saint, and greater than a king.

"Back from Jerusalem a moon ago," Legion then said, "I got your letter sweet From Father John; and then did fully know What steps for me to take were wholly meet. Feeling that I to Margie was remiss,
And your wrongs, Count, rousing my sympathies,
With Father John I soon to Court was gone
Your pardon to secure. Good Father John,
(Who of the wicked plot knew everything,)
Your history gave in full unto the King,
Who was sore grieved that such great wrong he'd
done,

A man so brave and good, a friend so true, And gladly pardon gave, as was most justly due."

"Oh, he was kind, and so was Father John," She said; then added from a second thought, "But kindest, best of all were you, my dear, For by your efforts these results were wrought." "Little thought I before I left your isle," Legion did add; "I was so very near The man who, though condemned to long exile, Of all mankind the one, I did the most revere."

"Twas all my fault," the Maiden interposed,
And to her father turned. "Except your name,
All this to me Legion in full disclosed,
And had I not from secret sense of shame
The facts from you so wrongfully concealed,
You, in due season, would have questions asked
That then to you would fully have revealed
That Legion here was your dear comrade's son.
But by such strange events my mind was tasked

That in a dream I lived, and nought seemed real,
Nor did I know how with such things to deal
Until, alas, Legion away had gone.
But oh, I've suffered much, for that great error
done."

Then on her father's knee she bowed her head, And wept. Down by her side Legion did kneel, Taking her hand in his, while tears he shed. "Grieve not, my love; let us no sorrow feel," Softly he said, the while her head he raised. "We blame you not, so don't yourself defame. Not you alone, but I myself was dazed. If any wrong was done, I am the one to blame."

"No, Legion, dear, 'twas I,"—"Now children quit Such quarreling," the Sire in laughter said. Legion half blushed at Strombold's timely wit; Smiling she raised her eyes, and quickly fled All signs of grief. Then Legion kissed her hand, And at her feet sat down, upon the silvery sand.

A graphic picture did this canto end:
There sat the three near to the ocean strand;
Faith, love, and joy, in unity did blend;
While towards the east, not far, a bow the ocean spanned.

CANTO 3

STROMBOLD EULOGIZES LEGION'S SIRE

And there awhile in silence did they rest.
"So you're brave Legion's son!" the Count did say.

"He was my friend, in days that were my best. Alas, what visions of that awful day!
Like panoramas loom they in my mind,
Until my natural eyes seem almost blind.
Oh, what a battle that at Wodenow!
All side by side we struggled with the foe,
And in our wake lay many a vanquished knight,
Whom with our spears we pierced, or with our swords did smite.

"Parted at length we were in the mêlée.

Hearing a raven croak upon my right,

I turned, and lo, Legion again in sight.

Half way around he turned to look for me,

Bloody his face: his mind I understood.

That look filled me with Norse ferocity,

And save him, in my heart, I fiercely swore I would.

"The rest, no doubt, you've heard from Father John.

From loss of blood he died,—by slow degrees; Of all mankind the perfect paragon, Renowned alike upon all lands and seas. At Wodenow we laid his body deep,

And on his tomb his glory did extol,
While many thousand gallant knights did weep.
But he to Heaven went; his mighty soul
Too lofty was, low 'neath the sod to sleep.
His faithful steed they buried where he died,
Standing upon his feet, in armor glorified;
Ready to start, some said, when Legion should bestride.

"While on his couch your father slow did bleed, Good Father John so kind and gentle was, So like the holy men of whom we read, Your father's heart he won unto his cause, And he the Christ confessed, and was baptized, Avouched his faith in the Apostles' Creed, From all his sins by the good father freed, And he in holy bliss immortalized; So when at last he answered death's stern nod, His hand he gave the priest, his soul he gave to God.

"Before from pain death gave his soul release,
To Father John and me he much did say;
And often grieved that from the paths of peace,
The love of fame had caused his feet to stray.

'Wicked my life in Heaven's sight,' said he,

'My only law came from my pedigree,
And from my wishes, hopes, and appetites;
The smiles of Kings and Queens my main delights,
And all I did was mainly for their sake.

Honors, titles, thanks and high offices, Stars, medals, ribbons, trophies, dignities, The only things I longed for when awake, The only things I dreamed of when asleep; All which I now do hold as gaudy baubles cheap.

"'But open now my eyes, restored my mind,
To what did once delight I now am blind,
The follies I did love I now do hate,
What once seemed substance now I find but gloss,
What once thought gold I now know is but dross,
And insignificant what once seemed great.
Fame's shining crown I once so hankered for;
As badge of infamy, I now hate and abhor.'

"Such were great Legion's words, as slow he bled;
His boy he begged me find, and on his head
To lay my hand, (as now I do,) and say:
'Whene'er thy life may brighten or grow dim,
Thy father chargeth thee remember him;
If in thy heart ambition makes its stay,
(While young you are and brave, hopeful and stout,)

Cast it all out, as God cast Satan out
Of Heaven. Ambition him a devil made,
And down to wicked deeds did him degrade,
Archangel though he was; how easy then
Can it vile devils make of fallen men?
Be kind to every thing, give nothing pain,
Make of thy life to every one some gain,

Love only love, and nothing hate but hate, This do, and then that curse at Baldurbane, Which lays me low in death, will never be thy fate."

While he his father's great commandment spoke On Legion's head the Count his hand did place, As though a double blessing to invoke.

"Your father lives again in you my son, You bear his name and form, and have his face, And may your tide of life more smoothly run!"

"Amen!" said Margie, when her Sire was through, While softly on a cliff, the white sea dove did coo.

CANTO 4

LEGION'S LOCKET OF GOLD

By memories of Legion's sire inspired,
Of Legion's mother then the Count inquired.
Legion replied, "Alas, my mother's dead.
My father's death the cause. Upon her bed
She fell and swooned when she your letter read;
And soon did die, her soul of joy bereft."
"Yes, father," said the Maid in sympathy,
"All this did Legion tell before he left;
Besides his parents' portraits did I see,
Within a golden locket, painted bright,
Which on his breast he wore, all hidden from the
sight."

"Let me the locket see," the Count did ask.
From 'round his neck, where it was fastened tight,
Legion the locket loosed,—(no easy task,)
And showed it to the Count, with tender care.
"Yes, 'tis his face,—'tis Legion's countenance,—
And yours: his perfect duplicate you are."
"Yes," said the Maid, taking at both a glance,
"But older he, and not so fair of face:
Nor does his beard his comeliness enhance,
And for a man he wears excess of lace."
No man nor other mortal half so fair
In Margie's eyes as her dear lover was,
So no comparison the Maid could bear,
But in the other she would quickly see some
flaws.

"But see! What's this? a woman's hair, I vow!" She cried, taking a closer scrutiny.

A look most strange, akin to jealousy,
Came on her lovely face, and placid brow.

A pang pierced through her heart, unfelt till now.
Then Legion blushed, and to his eyes came tears,
For full his soul with joy and misery,
From mingled memories of woful gone by years.

"Sweet love, 'tis yours," he said, all tenderly.
"From your dear head upon my face it blew.
One happy day when on the cliff we sat,
You holding in your hand your feathered hat,
While near at hand the white sea dove did coo.

In here I've treasured it for sake of you; And this is how it in the locket happed." On Legion's face then glowed her happy eyes With smile like one in adoration rapt; No saint more saintly looked, at worship in the skies.

Love's treasures neither measured are weighed;

For bulk, or weight, or value in a trade, Love careth not; a flower, or e'en a leaf, A scrap of paper with her name thereon, Or something she some time did write in brief In happier days, alas, forever gone; Such are love's treasures; and in lovers' eyes More valued are than houses, lands or gold, Or richest silks that merchants most do prize, Or bonds, or bills,-or aught, that can be bought or sold.

In Cupid's bank, no money of the mint; Its sole deposits flowers, letters, locks Of hair, portraits and toys,—and scraps of print, Rings, ribbons, buttons, rubbish,—in a box, (Things of no value to the common ken,) Pictures of hearts, Cupids, angels and doves. Mementoes worthless to all other men Prizes most precious are to him who loves. His smitten soul doth through his tender eyes

Gloat long thereon with blissful memories; Time, place and circumstance his world compose, While close at hand his lady love doth seem, And radiant to his soul her image glows, He hardly half awake, and half in happy dream.

Kings treasures have that seldom eyes behold, Gold, silver, jewelry and precious plate; The earth hath diamonds, pearls and mines of gold,

And ocean's wealth none can exaggerate;
But such a prize is found on earth nowhere
As that small keepsake from the lady fair
Who has his heart in hers securely rolled.
His love transfigures it until it has
A soul divine, a language and a face,
That doth all common pelf unspeakably surpass.

When once love's ichor gets into his veins
It so doth magnetize a lover's soul
That henceforth bound to her he is with chains,
And 'round her all his hopes and prayers do roll.
To her his thoughts do ever gravitate,
And him thereafter she doth re-create,
Whate'er his fate, parted, or to her wed.
Even a single hair from her dear head
Upon his heart hath such a magic force
That like a fetich it he all adores;
And sight, or touch, or even thought of it
Fills him with secret joy, divinely exquisite.

While he and Margie were so far apart, Heavy the loads from Legion's grieving heart That single hair of hers did often lift, Saving at times his soul from Hell's abyss, Through blackest clouds making a shining rift, And changing pangs of grief to thrills of bliss. That hair, that white sea dove, those vivid dreams, That Angel used her plans to consummate; And now 'twould seem her tender-hearted schemes Were working well, in spite of foes and fate: The charms of love upset the horoscopes of hate.

No Call Said

CHAPTER VII

WHERE NOUGHT BUT HAPPINESS

PROEM

Count Strombold again betroths his daughter to his comrade's son; and Legion and the Maid are now on the flood-tide of beatitude. They recount their plays while children, when she was called "Pearl," and he, "Many." The Maid's rapture is such that she has a dream of Paradise, which she relates. In the meantime, Yndafrene answers, "Yes."



CANTO 1

LEGION AND THE MAID AGAIN BETROTHED

They sat all happy in the cave's wide hall,
While Strombold did his troubled past recall.
"But having now," he said, "life's battles fought,
Here could I die content, but for the thought
That my dear child a woman has become;
And wrong it is to keep her here confined,
Away from friends and a congenial home,
And all the scenes that please a maiden's mind,
And thrill with ecstasy a woman's heart;
She cannot happy live, from such delights apart."

"Oh, father, happy I where'er you are,
And pine to death I would from you afar,"
Exclaimed the Maid, touched by her father's
plea

For her welfare. "Yet, on the rack," said he, "My broken limbs I would far rather spread, Or on the block of death lay down my head, Or live forever in a dungeon's chains, Than pardon beg for wrongs I've never done: Such the Varangian blood that fills my veins, And such the iron will, that nerves a sea-king's son.

"For in God's sight my soul is innocent,
And wholly free from any wrong intent.

Never to man will I bend down my knee.

Indeed, the King should pardon beg of me,—

Not I of him; for in bright honor's court
All men are equal when of good report.

In my integrity I have a pride;

I value it above all things beside,—

Above the crowns of kings or royal state;

It's mine, and wholly mine; it none can confiscate.

"But by the help of Legion's worthy son,
Just restitution has at last been done;
And I feel grateful to the King,—and you,
The King his wrong confesses: that is brave,
And good in him. None, or but very few
Who wear a crown, so nobly could behave;
(Kings turn from right to get a chance to
strike.)

This restitution gladly I accept;
That word 'pardon' I do not like, but like
The spirit that's behind. Oft have I wept,
And raged, because I could not change my fate.
But now all's well; life I'll begin anew,
On lines of peace and love, not war and hate.
And thrice rejoiced am I, indeed, that you,
Great Legion's son, of all beneath the sky,
Should prove my friend when I was most in need;
Thus love doth love beget and multiply,
For I your sire did help, by sword, and shield, and
steed."

To Legion turning Strombold warmly said:
"And once again, young man, you have my thanks;

Before a month of days away have sped I hope to get some credit with the banks, And then I will, at once, repay you well."
"Oh, father, he's so good," exclaimed the Maid:
"More joys he's brought us than our tongues can tell.

If he gets all we have, he'll not be overpaid.

"He is so good." Upon his face she gazed Adoringly, like saint in worship lost. "What I have done shall not a penny cost; No pay I'll ever take as 'pay' is phrased Where men sell things for silver, goods and gold, In language of the mart," Legion replied; "But if your daughter here, whose hand I hold, You'll give anew to be my darling bride, That will be pay indeed, more than a million fold.

"To save you both from prison on this isle,
My love for her, and your sure innocence,
My act did prompt, and only her dear smile
And your good will shall be my recompense,—
All happy I to have your sympathy.
The pay for love in deeds of love consist:
To take aught else were worse than simony."
With that all tenderly her hand he kissed,
While she with glistening eye and blushing glance,
Watched ever wistfully, her father's countenance.

"In all you've said to us reposing trust,
(Though she and I have not this step discussed,)
And as your sire and I did you betroth
Unto each other while young were you both,
If my child in her heart doth quite agree,
(For in this matter I do leave her free,)
Then, sir, your wedded wife, I'm willing she may
be."

Oh, had her face been painted then and there,
(Framed as it was in loosely gathered hair,)
Her eyes, her mouth, her cheeks, their changing
tints,

The look of bliss that in her face did shine, Commingled with devotion most divine, Surely the world had sworn it was a saint's, And adoration made, before her sacred shrine.

"But my home must be hers and hers be mine,"
Added the Sire: "apart I cannot live."
Then did the Maid unto her father give
A look intense of filial gratitude,
And round his neck her loving arms did twine,
And kissed his cheeks, and called him "dear" and
"good,"

While on her beaming face, the tears of joy did shine.

Then straightening up into a laugh she broke, And turning round to Legion gave her hand, In token that henceforth she was his own. Kissing her lips, thus to her Sire he spoke: "I thank you, Sire. Be this a happy band To bind our hearts in loving unison; You Margie's noble Sire, I henceforth as your son.

"Think not has faded from my mind away What in that city park one morn was done. It all appears as plain as yesterday, (Though many years have passed by since, and gone,)

How I as 'Many,' and Margie as 'Pearl.' (I then a boy and she a little girl,) Our troth did plight, and made a vow that

When fully grown, husband and wife would be; To which our sires did then and there agree. Not knowing 'Pearl' and Margie were the same, (Misled in part by difference in name,) And that troth on my conscience weighing hard.

But all the rest you know, -and how for fame I sought, thinking myself from Margie's love deharred."

Then Margie said, with face as bright as May, "I, too, remember 'Many,' and our play, And how a savage dog his wrist there bit; Often in all these years I've thought of it,

Sometimes perplexed thinking I might be bound By what was said and done on that playground; But now in Legion have I 'Many' found." Then Legion did his naked wrist expose, And showed the teeth-made scars still plain in rows.

Then did they kiss, and Margie laughing said, "To think we are the two, who in the park then played!"

This canto did the Scribe's fate well forecast;
And, ere another moon had o'er him passed,
Though mountains, plains and bays did them divide,

So mournful were his missives, that at last, Fair Yndafrene wrote word, that she would be his bride.

CANTO 2

CHILDHOOD'S DAYS RECALLED

Happy the Maid and Legion, sitting near,
That soothing eve, where oft they'd sat before,
So many months ago, when youths they were,
Looking afar, and listening to the roar
Of ocean's waves,—with nought to interfere.
Devotedly taking her hands in his,
And in her face gazing with emphasis,
"Margie," he said, "with all my heart and soul
You do I love, and worship and adore.

My thoughts and feelings you do so control From you apart I'll ne'er be happy more,-And cannot even live but at your side. For your dear sake bright fame I learned to hate, And back did come to beg you be my bride, My life and love to you I consecrate, And where your face I see, there will I ever bide."

Than returned lover, once deemed lost, or dead, But fondly loved, nought is more rapturous To Maiden's heart—when he returns to wed, And at her feet kneels all idolatrous. While Legion spoke she was in Paradise: Beatitude shone in her blushing face, And joyous gleams streamed from her loving eyes,

Her slender arms she 'round his neck did place; "All yours I am," she said, with tender kiss, Then sunk into his arms, o'ercome by perfect bliss.

All passions and emotions that are sweet, All thoughts and dreams of perfect ecstasy, Are focalized when lovers' lips do meet: The acme of supreme felicity, The zenith of true love's imagining, The lightning stroke of all that's ravishing, Joy's golden bowl with Heaven's nectar filled, All Paradise into one touch distilled.

That kiss doth bloom in memory evermore, And, like a beacon light upon the shore, Casts o'er life's troubled sea a ray of joy No night can hide away, no hurricane destroy.

After a silence long, but very sweet,
Legion thus spoke, in tones most soft and dear,
"When in my Hall young manhood I did greet
Unto my dreams a fair face did appear,
And by its gaze my soul was all bewitched.
Whose face it was I could not realize,
But often it my reveries enriched.
Sometimes it seemed an angel from the skies,
Sometimes I thought it might be fancy-made;
But one day seeing on my wrist that mark,
Bright memory gently came unto my aid,
And hers I knew it was, I'd played with in the
park.

"Then on my soul there came a passion strong To seek for her the whole creation through, For I did feel she did to me belong, And that to her my heart and life were due, As bound we were by a betrothal thong; But where she was somehow nobody knew. So crazed was I of nought else could I think, And by the spell was drawn away from home, Guided at times by sea dove's gentle coo, Even unto the kingdom's very brink; And then upon the ocean wide did roam,—Some power pulling me, I could not overcome.

"Tossed by that storm, but by some angel helped, Cast was I dying on this island shore,
The while sea-devils for my life-blood yelped,
And ocean monsters for my corpse did roar.
When first your face I saw, you were I thought
That angel of my dreams and memory;
But this at once all came to utter nought
When I did learn your name and infamy,—
That curse of Baldurbane its spite so wrought;
And never till I met with Father John,
And he by prayers that curse had all undone,
Did I e'en dream that you, and my dear Pearl,
were one.

"I bore my father's, you your mother's name;
(For Margaret and Pearl mean but the same,
And Many is but Legion's synonym).
By these pet names in childhood were we known,
So that our parents would not be enthralled
When we, their namesakes, in the house were
called.

Yet such the mystery from this small root grown Long have we been unraveling the knot, At cost of many a sigh, and many a bitter moan.

"As 'Many' I by all have been forgot, And you as 'Pearl' for years remembered not. So that lost were we to each other's eyes, As though we each had lived in full disguise; And long it seemed that we would strangers be E'en when each other's faces we did see; Such is the magic power in a name To make things diff'rent seem, e'en when the very same.

"Yes, you're the girl I played with when a boy;
The lovely maid you are I saw in dreams.
Some angel surely did her powers employ
To join in one what seemed such distant streams.
Not for the glories of the Paladins,
Not for the fame of mighty Charlemagne,
Or other noted knights and sovereigns;
Not for all crowns, that valor e'er did gain,
Not for all trophies, won on battle-fields,
Not for all titles, for which proud men live,
Not for all spoils of swords, and spears, and
shields,
Not for all bonor, fame could ever give

Not for all honor, fame could ever give,
Not for all things of brightest fancies wove,
No, not for all of these,—and more, combined,
Would I exchange you and your precious love,
And all your graces sweet of heart and mind,
And your dear face, the loveliest and the best."
Then on her lips an ardent kiss he pressed;
The while the sea dove cooed, all happy on her
nest.

Upon a Leaf shone Joy, and happy Love, In form of Eden-bird and turtle dove.

Pouring their spirits forth in blissful tones, Happy as seraphs on their golden thrones:-While all about were visions of delight; Flowers the loveliest, and rainbows bright; Maidens in merriment, and youths in glee; Birds of fair forms and plumes, and sea doves white,

All in one splendid scene of general jubilee.

CANTO 3

THE MAID'S BEATITUDE

In perfect bliss the Maiden's soul was wrapped, And nought but good in any moment happed, While all around her bright beatitude. Her heart e'er fed on Eden's choicest fruit: Her spirit nectar drank, its only food; And music sweeter than Apollo's lute Within her soul sounded sweet jubilee, For him she did adore, her constant company.

At times it was her sole perplexity, (So dazzled she by jov's ecstatic gleams,) Whether it all was real, or phantasy, And she asleep, her raptures merely dreams. 'Neath Legion's smiles the lilies on her face Quickly gave way unto the rose of spring; Good health and strength did feebleness replace, And 'mong the rocks again, her laughter sweet did ring.

To Eden now, (in all love can reveal,)
Transfigured was the island Redenfayn.
Blest all supremely did the Maiden feel,—
A queen of joy, with undisputed reign.
Her charms enraptured him; his soul did stare,
Through eyes bewitched, upon her gladsome face.
No other maid seemed ever half so fair;
Unto no other man, had fortune shown such grace.

Men are all jubilant with ecstasies
When they gain that for which they've greatly yearned,

But none on earth enjoys such bliss of bliss As maiden when, her lover just returned, His smiling face she sees, and feels his kiss, The while he vows her only does he love; For hers the rapture of heart, mind and soul, When each of these at once has reached its goal, While love's electric thrills lift her herself above.

Such was the Maid, such her capacity,
And it a vision was of pure delight,
That blooming blissful face of hers to see
When Legion turned on her his eyes so bright,
And set rapture's electric currents free,
The while within her soul love sung this jubilee:

THE MAID'S SONG OF JOY

- "My heart is filled with all delights, My soul in bliss doth sing; No harm is here, and nought affrights, But good is every thing.
- "The days they come, the nights they go, One ceaseless round of bliss; No clouds obscure, no bleak winds blow, But sunshine all, and peace.
- "Nought is there here to cause annoy, Or mar felicity; Each minute brings some little joy, No month a misery.
- "Joy hath in me such virtue wrought I walk as 'twere on air; My spirit floats as by a thought Through all that's sweet and fair.
- "E'er by my side or within call, My love doth ever loom; He is my lord and yet my thrall, For me his face doth bloom.
 - "Then ever be this isle my home! My love forever here! Let those who wish to Heaven roam; 'Twere sin to change my sphere."

When read the Scribe this song of ecstasy, Such thrills of joy swept through his soul intense, Such raptures of delight and blissful glee Pervaded all his mind and every sense, Thinking that Yndafrene, at last, was his,—No words had he to voice his boundless bliss: So up he turned his face in gratefulness, And thanks to God his heart did silently express.

CANTO 4

THE MAID'S DREAM OF PARADISE

Together rambled Legion and the Maid,
That she by exercise her limbs might brace.
Beneath a linden tree their steps they stayed,
And made a bench-like rock their resting place.
"Now darling, tell me all your dream," he said.
"'Twas very long," she answered, with bright face;

"But the divinest ever mortal dreamed:
'Twas all of love, and Paradise,—and you;
And all so plain reality it seemed,
Each part perfect in form, in motion and in hue."

That he her face might more completely view His seat he left, and sat upon the sand, Close to her feet, and gently took her hand, With tender kiss. "First music did I hear," She said; "far off, where shone a vision fair; Then, with a golden flash, did Paradise appear.

"Unto my soul there came a sense of peace That did my mind from every thought release, And left my spirit void and satisfied. Oblivion sweet did all my senses soothe; Afloat I seemed, high where the skies were smooth, All bounds enlarged, all spaces waxed more wide, All distances indefinitely grew, All objects visible faded from view, All thoughts and feelings wholly ceased to be, One endless ocean of nonentity Was all,-was every thing,-save only me; And soon to nothingness did I disperse. All empty was the boundless universe, No width nor length, no high, no low, no deep, And nought was every thing,—save only perfect sleep.

"How long I rested thus I cannot say, But dreamily my life at last returned. In ecstasy my raptured spirit lay; No thought, nor wish, nor will; for nought I yearned; In all the world not one thing seemed amiss,-(Except, somehow, all this seemed recompense For what I bore after you wandered hence.) In one vast ocean of celestial bliss, My soul, from center to circumference, Was rocked by soothing waves of lovingness, As sleeping babe, beloved, a mother's arms caress.

"Some darling thing seemed sleeping by my side; My name I heard it call, in tones of love. My eyes I oped,—'twas you! I seemed to bide The heights of pure beatitude above, You by my side, I resting on your arm, My hand in yours, my brow against your face, Nothing to cause disquiet or alarm, But I all full of bliss, thus held in your embrace.

"Then changed my dream: I was in Paradise,
And angels bright filled all the land and air,
Some in delight flew high into the skies;
Thousands unto the mountains did repair;
Each vale bloomed brightly with their happy
smiles;

Each field rejoiced beneath their tender tread.

Some roamed the waters to the distant isles;

Some in mere joy their shining pinions spread;

Some with their hands and wings sweet music chimed;

On rainbow ladders high, some unto Heaven climbed.

"Angels on harps of gold with silver strings
Played as in raptures, gayly dancing round
The crystal fountains and the jetting springs,
Their brows with wreaths of brightest flowers
crowned,

Singing the while, with merry choruses, Their very souls thrilled with their gayeties;

And words from forth their lips all sweetly rolled Like purest pearls strung on thin threads of gold. A bliss divine seemed shed in showers there, (Like crystal rain through sunshine glittering,) And on my spirit fell as soft as air, Causing sweet joys within my heart to spring. These sights and sounds all so divinely good, Inmixed with every sweet and all that's fair, Immersed my soul in such beatitude, I wished no other thing, to be no other where.

"At last there came an angel tall and fair, And gave me leave that land to make my home. Just as my mouth I oped to answer her, Of you I thought,—and then was stricken dumb To think how near to losing you I'd come! Then I awoke, all glad that I was here, Content on earth to live, and be with you, my dear."

"Angelic dream! and sweetly told," he cried, Looking into her face with love and pride. Downward she bent, and kissed his upturned lips Which to his loving heart did Paradise eclipse.

CHAPTER VIII

LEGION AT REDENFAYN

PROEM

Legion explains to the Maid the secret of his departure from the island, and apologizes to Strombold therefor, who fully exonerates him, realizing how ambitious youths of noble lineage long for adventures and knightly deeds. The King sends a ship to Redenfayn to take them all to their respective homes. The Maid expresses her mingled emotions of joy and regret on leaving the island, and bids it farewell.



CANTO 1

LEGION'S EXPLANATION OF HIS DEPARTURE

OH, isle of Redenfayn, abode of bliss, Epitome of Paradise art thou! Thy silvery sands the waves forever kiss, The light of joy shines now upon thy brow. There Love hath for a season built her shrine, Spreading around the peace of blessedness, Causing the soul with pleasures pure to shine, Awakening in the heart glees numberless, And making life on earth, an ecstasy divine.

Where true love is there's true felicity.

In love's fair hand is held the golden key
That opes the shining doors of jubilee.

Around the neck she puts her golden chain,
Upon the hand she puts her diamond ring;
And wheresoe'er love doth supremely reign
The maid is crowned by him his darling queen,
And he throned by her side, her loyal subjectking.

Upon the brow love stamps her shining seal, Within the heart she writes the loved one's name, Within the soul she rings her magic bell, And on the serpent, discord, plants her heel; Then straightening proudly up, all free from shame,
Unto the loved one's self, sets up exclusive claim.

The Maid's keen mind good reason seemed to lack Why Legion, loving her as he did say, On her and love so coldly turned his back, And left her lone to grieve her life away. "I blame you not," said he; "for even I Can now myself barely such act approve, And 'tis most hard to give the reason why. I loved you with a love surpassing love, A love that into exile drove me far, While my poor heart and head were with themselves at war.

"So strong I feared our love would soon become
I might forget my honor, King and home.
What was for me to do if here I stayed,
Upon so small an isle, a Legion born,
Spending my time disporting with a maid?
What would have been for me, but pity mixed
with scorn?"

Then told he how he found the stranded boat, Put it in order, then got it afloat; And how it seemed just sent to take him hence. "I loved you so of it I dared not tell, For fear my love and your sweet eloquence Would start a sorrow neither could dispel.

The fear of God, the dread of human law, Pride in my name, which stain had never known,-All these combined did force me to withdraw, Before by word, or act, beyond recall I'd gone.

"Grief I could stand, dishonor never could: A Legion's heart dishonor cannot hold; Should it once enter break my heart it would. A Legion's acts by honor are controlled. Two paths before me stretched: neither all good. One downward led to joys that might degrade, One upward led to grief, perhaps to fame: This one I chose. The Legions are so made To see the thing that's right, and do it, are the same.

"Such were the reasons that my spirit moved. For guidance to my parents had I prayed, And in my conscience felt that they approved. In leaving you I did as duty bade To you, myself, my parents and your Sire, And feel my conscience free from Heaven's ire. Had I but known your noble father's name. Or had a hint he was my father's friend, Alas, how much we'd saved of grief and shame! But no tears let us shed, for happy is the end.

"Yet pangs I'll ever feel that this my act Should in your tender heart distress have wrought. But who can tell, in view of every fact, What otherwise our fortune might have brought? For life's events cannot be figured out Like sums in algebra, too manifold The unknown quantities: so let us be consoled."

"Yes, Legion, I am all consoled," she said,
"Not till this moment did I understand
The noble reasons that controlled your head,
And made your heart subject to its command.
Since I've heard father tell of your great sire,
And of the blood that flows in Legion veins,
Full well I realize your great desire
Bright fame to win in glory's grand campaigns.
It all a problem seemed no one could solve,
Nor from the maze any result evolve;
But while the ciphering was slow and long,
Some angel kind did at the blackboard stand,
And though ofttimes the figures pointed wrong,
She ever worked with steady eye and hand,
Until at last she demonstration made, most grand.

"And though afar from me for fame you strayed The unknown quantities came to our aid, And here again all happy you did land, Bringing with you great joy and blessedness. So we our backs will turn on past distress, Nor weep again the tears that have been shed, We'll let what's dead stay buried with the dead, Into the future look with grateful hearts, And in life's journey take both new and happier starts."

"So be it, darling!" Legion quickly said, And kissed her cheeks and lips in joyous mood. Just then ashore did drift that raven, dead, Which had so often croaked o'er Legion's head; While on a rock the sea dove softly cooed, Glad that no more 'twould be by that vile bird pursued.

Those "unknown quantities," that solved their fates

So happily, that Angel did suggest; By her pure charms removed she evil weights, And holy thoughts put into Legion's breast,-Using the magic of the locket's hair. With all the sorcery of perfect love: Guiding his feet away from many a snare. And scattering cogent spells, through cooes of white sea dove.

The powers of hate did use the raven's croak On Legion's head all evils to invoke,-As to his grandsire it predicted pain When that crazed mother cursed at Baldurbane. Most strong, indeed, the conjuries of hate, They crook all paths, and alter even fate; But evil charms the charm of love outcharms, And of their wicked spells all fiends disarms. Thus love's sweet power oft miracles achieves. And happy wonders works: so read the Myrtle Leaves.

CANTO 2

LEGION'S APOLOGY TO STROMBOLD

As seemed fair Margie so inquisitive
Why from the isle abruptly he did go,
Legion surmised her Sire might like to know;
And so to him did explanation give:
"Your daughter, Sire, I soon did learn to love:
How could I help it? she so very kind,
With every grace a young man's heart to move;
We both susceptible,—with nought our hearts to bind.

"I, as became a Legion, dreamed of fame.

She told me you were by the King exiled;
And how could I at Court be free from blame,
Should I for wife select an exile's child?

My lord, I'm talking plain as does become
Brave Legion's son; for, in a father's eyes
My act may merit no encomium,
And you disposed my course to criticize;
And that you may not unto me refuse
The judgment you would wish, if in my shoes,
I pray you all the facts so to review
That as they seemed to me, they now may seem
to you.

"A hard dilemma fate for me had wove. Your daughter here I did most deeply love.

But fame and honor, also, were most dear. What course to take to me was far from clear. Besides I'd been betrothed while yet a boy Unto the darling daughter of the Dane, And this great fact my conscience did annoy, As it bound me from others to refrain, And my sire's pledge I dared not to destroy. All led astray by difference in name, I never once did dream Margie and Pearl the same.

"So I resolved to sail across the sea, And by pursuing what did seem my fate Forget a passion that then seemed for me Unwise,—for her, perhaps, not fortunate. But when the facts good Father John did tell, That showed my father's dearest friend you were. And that save him you were without a peer; How in fierce battles with the infidel 'Gainst awful odds you'd borne him from the field, When wounded unto death, and nursed him long and well:

"And how by secret foes you'd been assailed, And all your honors by the King repealed, While you were wholly free from any blame. Thus learning what I owed in father's name, I then resolved I would the King implore Your lands and honors fully to restore, And bringing back your pardon, certified, Beg you, in full return, for Margie for my bride." When Legion ceased the Sire a while looked grave, (Margie deeply intent, with face aflame;)
Then with emotion thus his judgment gave:
"Good sir, no wrong you've done in thought or deed.

Most high and noble was your every aim,
Worthy a Legion's son and Christian's creed;
And towards my daughter here, all free are you
from blame."

Her snow white arms then 'round her father's neck

The Maiden threw, and warmly kissed his cheek, And thanked him for the kind words he did speak. With face enraptured she had Legion watched While he his secret motives did reveal.

Some pearl-like tears within her eyes were hatched;

And on her lips a tremor now and then
Showed the emotions which her heart did feel.
But plain it was unto discerning ken
The joy his story gave when he did tell
About her beauty and his love so keen;
And it a struggle hard did cost to quell
Her words, when he so sadly did proclaim
The conflict in his heart that raged between
His perfect love for her, and duty to his name.

The pictures which this canto did adorn The Scribe did fascinate, so sweet they were; Legion so grand, like one of heroes born; Margie in him so rapt, withal so fair; Strombold in robe of State, and look so wise;-Enough they were the sight to magnetize. And what a glow on Margie's face did dwell, When Legion to her Sire his love for her did tell!

CANTO 3

STROMBOLD FORECASTS THE FUTURE

The Count inspired by philosophic mood, And Legion's talk, continued thus to speak: "I know how thoughts of war do chill the blood, And raise the fears, of those whose souls are weak; But to those noble youths of heroes sprung, The beat of drum, the trumpet's brazen blare, The thrilling sound of tocsin loudly rung, The banners grand, high waving in the air, The knights in shining armor, proud and gay, Mounted on prancing steeds, that snort and neigh,

(All glad to prove their strength in battle fray;) Couriers dashing all swiftly to and fro, The chieftain's thrilling shout to charge the foe, The onward rush, the frantic clash of arms, The thousand battle cries and wild alarms,

The give and take that enter in the fight,
The shouts of victory, the foe in flight;—
All these within the soul of noble youth
Bring on deliriums of wild delight,
A Legion's worthy son could not forego, in sooth.

These thrills I've felt, the shocks of battle stood,

As did become one of Varangian blood.

In armor clad, and mounted on war-steed,
I've weapons crossed with men of gallant breed;
Whacks I've received, and answered with a whack;
Wounds I've received, and death have given back;
Over the battle field like whirlwind swept,
And oft in victory did I rejoice—"
(His eyes here Strombold dropped, and lowered his voice,)
"Yes, and the battle o'er, like woman wept
Over the bloody corpse of some dear friend,
And to Valkyries did his soul commend,—
Brought back his sword to prove his honor had

"My tribe of yore in barbarism dwelt,
And in the skins of savage beasts went dressed.
Their tiger-like heredity I've felt
As if by bloody fiend I was possessed.
Though sometimes in this country called a Dane,
Yet is my blood of pure Varangian strain;

been kept.

And in my youth Thor was my paragon. Out from the Norse-land sailed Leif Ericsson, My great ancestor, who in regions west, Searching, perhaps, for earthly Paradise, Beyond the sea of darkness, storm and ice, Sometimes Atlantic called, a New World found, Peopled by hairless beasts in human shape, Above a monkey and below an ape, Who fought like very fiends, nor cared for any wound.

"My tribe was foremost when, on England's coasts,

And up French rivers, swarmed Varangian hosts, Sweeping the land afar with fire and sword; And doing deeds of valor and of force, The like whereto the world had never heard; And it a legend is among the Norse, That the last hero borne in Odin's reign To fair Valhalla on Valkyrie's horse, Was my grandfather, slain 'mong heaps himself had slain.

"When we gave up old Odin for the Christ, (Who for our welfare had been sacrificed,) And learned that his birth-place, his home and grave,

Were in possession of the Infidel, Who Christians treated worse than we a slave, We swore that there no longer should they dwell, And crusades made those places to redeem, That there once more the Cross of Christ might stand supreme.

"Starting near here in our Varangian sea,
Now Baltic called, our race did all agree
The earth between us wholly to divide.
So, of the mighty world the eastern side
One tribe did choose, and seized the Russian shore.

Over the western half the rest did pour
In sea-king ships, propelled by sail and oar.
And still moves on our great Varangian race,
With change of name as well as change of place,
(As o'er new lands afar we stretch our reign,)
Russian, German, Norman, English and Dane,
Conquering where'er we go over the earth's broad
face;

"Ruric's strong sons towards the shining east; And on its furthest sea their eyes they feast.— Some day, Eric's brave breed again will sail Westward to that New World, and without fail A nation found, of glories manifold, That will outshine the grandest states of old;— Which nation right to do, some distant day Will cross the waters wide to far Cathay, And there the sons of Ruric will they find, And joining hands they will the whole earth bind. Thenceforward all the mighty world will be But one Varangian land, and one Varangian sea.

"When thus our race over the earth shall rule, Then peace will reign supreme, and war no more; But of that happy time the vestibule We can't yet see, much less pass through the door. Yet have I faith that in some distant day, The dove on flags the eagle's place will take, Man nevermore his brother man will slay, And Christ's millennial morn bright on a new earth break "

"Oh, father, you're so noble, wise and good!" Smiling the Maiden said,—and soft the sea dove cooed.

CANTO 4

THE DEPARTURE FROM REDENFAYN

To Redenfayn the King a ship did send, With Father John on board, unto their homes To bring Strombold, the Count, now dubbed his "friend."

Margie his daughter fair, Legion if there, Their goods and furniture, their chests and tomes, Notions,-and everything, for which they had a care.

While came the ship across the breezy main, Its mission there Legion did thus explain: "In greatest state, the King did firm declare, The Count should be brought home, that all might know

The badge of royal favor he did wear,
And on his fame no blot nor stain did show.
He wanted me to wait and take the ship;
But wait I could not, for I feared delay
Might give misfortune chance my steps to trip;
And somehow on my soul a fear did weigh
That if I lingered I might be too late:
(Delay doth always give more chance to adverse fate.")

Her lover's hand the Maid did take and press,
To show how much she did appreciate
His thoughtful course, and loving eagerness.
The ship was anchored in a moment's time,
And on the shore a small boat landed soon.
Oh, what a sight, how thrilling and sublime,
The meeting 'twixt Strombold and Father John.
Into each other's arms with greetings glad,
They rushed, like man and wife long torn apart,
They kissed, they hugged, they cried, like women
mad

When some great sudden joy doth overflow their heart.

And each so did the other all engross,
The ship's good mission they did quite forget,
Until the ship's captain, in words jocose,
Hurry did urge, as time was being lost.
Then turning, Father John did Legion greet,
With warm embrace, kind words and holy kiss.
Lastly the Maid he warmly did accost:

Her hand he took, nor did it quite release Until with crucifix, he gave his holy peace. Quickly that happy day the moments flew With Strombold and the Maid: neither quite knew What they should take away, what leave behind, So great and various was their scattered hoard. Legion did help, and Father John so kind. All aided by the captain's stalwart crew. Still high the sun when all at last on board; And none desirous of the least delay, Homeward the good ship turned, and gladly sailed away.

As up the anchor came and wide her sails The royal ship did to the breeze display, Taking her seat beside the guarding rails, Margie, with moist eyes set on Redenfayn, That dear isle saw fast fade beyond her view. Her smiles of joy were mixed with sighs of pain, As in her tender heart, she sang this fond adieu:

THE MAID'S FAREWELL TO REDENFAYN

"Farewell, sweet island Redenfayn, My fondest love I leave with thee. Some happy day I'll come again, And bring my lover back with me.

"Oh, Redenfayn, where'er I be, However great my name and state, Ever my heart will be with thee, And for thee pray a happy fate.

"Oh, Redenfayn, thou'rt lost to sight:
 Unto another world I roam;
But every place to me is bright
 Where Legion is,—for there's my home.

"Who saileth east will come again
As my dear Legion came to me;
So though I sail unto the main
My Redenfayn again I'll see.

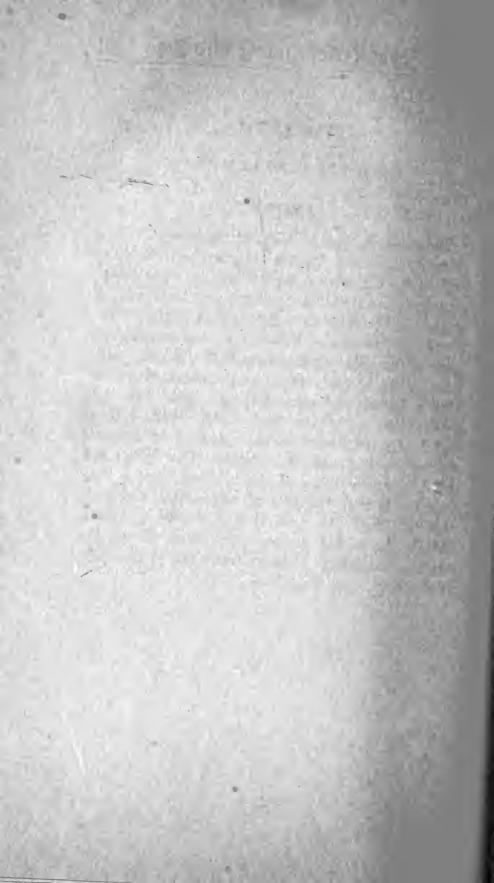
"While my dear Legion's hand I hold I'll risk all fates that may betide, Completely happy and consoled, While his dear self is at my side.

"Then onward sail, oh, royal ship,
To my new home that is the old;
Blessings I know attend the trip,
And joys and pleasures manifold."

Just then the Maid did hear a gentle coo,
And looking up her sea dove came to view,
Sitting aloft all happy on the mast;
While round about some presence virtue cast.
Then felt the Maid it was that Angel near
Ever to guard, to comfort and to cheer;
And all there was to hope, and nought there was
to fear.

Once while of other days they talking low, She telling of their love-plays in the park, How in her dreams she had him for her beau, How ere they'd met she'd bade him disembark, And in a song her love did boldly show; In turn, he telling how betrothed they were, And how she grew to be his spirit-love, How, when becoming her idolater, A star-born maid she came from skies above; And how in Margie's self these three were one; Faith, hope and love combined, and all, at last, his own.

While talking thus, o'erhead her white sea dove Cooed mysticly, in tone of raptured nun, And in their hearts that Angel good did move, As though to each she gave her benison. Then revelation blossomed in their souls, That, for the mutual love their parents bore, They in their turn were born each other's goals, And power divine did each to each restore, When fiends and fate combined to interfere,-Solving the riddle of their strange career; To comrade's daughter bringing comrade's son, And righting all the wrongs, to noble Strombold done.

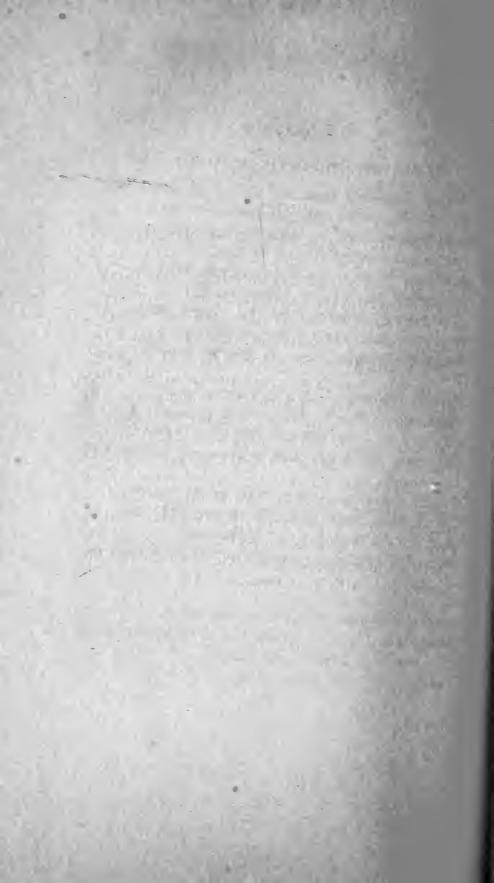


CHAPTER IX

THE JOYOUS CONSUMMATION

PROEM

On a bright day in May, at Shonbirg Hall, in presence of their friends, Legion and the Maid are married, Father John officiating. The King's commissioner then read a royal proclamation, announcing Strombold's restitution, gazetting Margaret as Countess of Redenfayn, and dubbing Legion as Knight of Shonbirg Hall. At the same time, in the Queen's name, he presented Margaret with a locket and neck-chain of gold. The villagers had a festive time. Strombold, Legion and Margaret, on invitation, attended a Court reception, to her exquisite delight. The Jester was there. Legion received the accolade, and a hag announced that the ban of Baldurbane had been removed by this marriage. Shonbirg Hall, greatly beautified, becomes the home of all the parties, including Father John and Jux. The Scribe weds with Yndafrene.



CANTO 1

MARRIAGE OF LEGION AND THE MAID

Weird Shonbirg Hall had all its weirdness lost. Mechanics, smiths and gardeners,—a host Had been at work, buildings and grounds to dress, And all transfigured they to loveliness. And now thereat, one sunny day in May Assembled was a merry company, Convened for pleasure by the King's decree. On every side was frolicsome display, And all the many signs of general jubilee.

Within the village church a fairy scene,
Made up of flowers bright and garlands green,
Of wreaths and ribbons and gay tapestry,
Paintings of kings and queens, of counts and
saints,

Of Legion's sire,—with rich embellishments; Of all that tends to fill the heart with glee, And all the beauty and the bravery Beheld at weddings grand, of those of high degree.

Assembled were of notables the chief: Strombold the Sire, grand Count of Fedmer Feif, Wearing his sword, and plume, and badges all; Margie his daughter, Maid of Redenfayn, With titled aunts and lovely bridesmaids twain; Legion the brave, good Graf of Shonbirg Hall, Jux, once a serf, now free for service done; The holy priest of God, good Father John, Lords of the land, ladies in splendid gear; Neighbors and tenants, loyal all and true: Present, also, the King's commissioner, With herald robed in state, and royal retinue.

When those invited all at last had met,
And round the altar stood the wedding train,
"Who gives away the Maid of Redenfayn,
Heiress of Fedmer Fief, fair Margaret,
In holy matrimony?" asked the priest,
Good Father John, as she and Legion twain
Before the altar stood, and song had ceased.
Taking his daughter's hand, Count Strombold
said:

"Fulfilling her betrothal long since made, To my friend Legion here, I give her, to be wed."

Her hand Legion all smiling then did take,
And on her finger placed a ring of gold,
Vowing to take her as his wedded wife,
And for no other ever her forsake.
Fair Margie then Legion's right hand did hold,
And vowed his wife to be while lasted life.
(Thus was fulfilled, at last, their childhood's
troth,

Despite the webs that adverse fates had spun.) The priest, his hands upon the heads of both, Pronounced them man and wife, the twain made

And in God's holy name their lives did bless, Wishing unto them both, unending happiness.

Then round the bridegroom's neck her arms the bride

Did throw, and kissed his lips in ecstasy, Such her transport of love and joy and pride; While he, in turn, embraced her lovingly. Then tears of tender sympathy flowed free From eyes of gentle ladies at her side. Loudly the church bell rung a jubilee, The choir struck up a wedding symphony, And all drew near the bride to greet, or see; While from the belfry a vile raven flew In awful fright away; but near a dove did coo.

Here many pictures on the Leaves did glow, And many signs of sorrow's overthrow. Nowhere such wealth of fancy, myths and dreams, The Scribe had seen as here the Leaves did show; Such glints of Paradise, such Eden-gleams, Such scenes of ecstasy, such rainbow-hues, That did a sense of bliss through all his soul diffuse.

Then cried the Scribe, "What scenes of jubilee! But nought are they to what my own will be. Of form and color mine will not consist; For then all human sense will be dismissed, And in the highest heaven my soul will trill, Borne 'bove the stars by love's electric thrill, With Yndafrene my bride, in bliss ineffable."

CANTO 2

HONORED BY THE KING AND QUEEN

While in their joy all were unanimous,
Three trumpet blasts the herald loud did blow,
And stepping forth made proclamation thus:
"Hear ye, hear ye, the King's commissioner!
Let all attention give, that all may know
What words they are my lord doth have to say."
"Good people," said the King's commissioner,
"Deputed am I by our gracious King
To stand for him on this most happy day;
And in my trusted hand, his royal mandate bring."

A parchment, with the royal seal displayed, He read, revoking all the orders made Count Strombold's properties to confiscate; Restoring every title and estate, His honors, serfs and lands,—and all beside; Of all back rents repayment ordering,

And making him a Counsellor to the King; Margaret his daughter, now brave Legion's bride,

Created was Countess of Redenfayn,
And (since her stay there had removed its
blight,)

The isle was made a part of her domain;
For valiant deeds and honor ever bright,
And service done at King's and Emperor's call,
Legion himself, now graf, dubbed Knight of
Shonbirg Hall.

To give these matters proper emphasis, All three, by their most Royal Majesties, Summoned to Court on next reception day, When Legion would the accolate receive, And Count Strombold himself in state display, That all might know his fame he did retrieve. Then, for a wedding present from the Queen The King's commissioner, in happy vein, To Countess Margaret gave a golden chain,—Pendant thereto a heart-shaped locket, set With all such precious gems as make an amulet.

Ranging in martial rank the retinue,
Again his trumpet thrice the herald blew,
Till far and wide its echoes loud did ring.
"Long live their Royal Majesties!" he cried
"Long live Count Strombold, Counsellor to the
King!

Who rises higher than before his fall; Long live Sir Legion, Knight of Shonbirg Hall! And Margaret of Redenfayn, his bride!" With loud applause, and some in ecstasies, The happy crowd, as though electrified, Approved the noble acts of their high Majesties.

Never at Shonbirg Hall a day so bright. Strombold the mighty Count, Legion the Knight, Margie, the Countess fair and happy bride, Good Father John, and Jux now rich and free, By everybody there were glorified, All wishing them long life, and all felicity. Great was that festival at Shonbirg Hall. Tables with viands spread were set for all, And every one received an ample mess, And drinks that fostered fun, not foolishness. For lovers many long and shaded walks, Sports for both young and old, and merry games, Seats in the shade for lookers-on, and talks,—All kindly supervised, by discreet elder dames.

Long had the villagers most deeply grieved,
That such a ban had blighted Shonbirg Hall,
And that its grafs, despite great fame achieved,
Early in life predestined seemed to fall.
And now that Legion had his wanderings ceased,
And home had come at last, with honor crowned,
Had brought a bride, a mighty Count and priest,
And had adorned the Hall, and all its ground,

And everything about had beautified,—
Happy the villagers, and high their hopes and
pride.

CANTO 3

THE HONEYMOON

Sing all ye tuneful birds, coo every dove; Bloom all fair flowers, your fragrance sweet spread wide;

Be glad all gentle beasts that ladies love;
Be happy all as Legion and his bride.
Ye planets, brighter in your orbits shine,—
With sweet-eyed Venus, never Mars, your guide;
Oh moon, smile in your fulness all divine;
Ye stars, new glories in your beams display;
Oh sun, make all thy seasons like to May;
And all thy Mays like this bright bridal day;
Oh Heaven, ope your doors and bend them low;
Oh angels, oftener come and longer stay;
Oh God, make earth again like Eden glow.
In bliss at last Legion and Margie are,
And in his arms again that Angel of the star.

Sorrow is dead, and love and joy supreme;—All realized their every happy dream.
What once their souls did see now see their eyes,
And nought there is unto their bliss to add.
The bride and bridegroom dwell in Paradise,

(For Paradise is where the soul is glad.)
All evil fates themselves afar did take.
Their woful past, and many griefs and tears,
Their present state more like a Heaven make.
In perfect peace their hearts and spirits bide;
Now rests the pendulum of hopes and fears,
Equation comes and equilibrium,
Rapture is reached, and love is satisfied
Forevermore, all evil overcome,
And they of every joy, compounded, have the sun.

For picture here nought but a curtain shone Of silk most fine, broidered with flowers rare; That what transpired within might ne'er be known;

For holy is the place where bride and groom repair.

No longer penned in little Redenfayn,
With nought to see but water, rocks and skies,
They now have river, forest, vale and plain,
And these were ceaseless joys in Margie's eyes.
Hand locked in hand now by the streams they
rove,

Along the vales, and o'er the flowery meads, Or pause for rest within the shady grove, Or stroll meandering, wherever fancy leads. Below the crystal waterfall they sit, And gaze upon the rainbows in the spray, While bright-winged birds hither and thither flit, And those that sing trill forth their roundelay. She gathers flowers before to her unknown, She sees sweet birds of species wholly new: Indeed, a new world all around her shone, And wonder over all, her magic glamour threw.

They chase in sport young rabbits o'er the lawn, They ribbons tie upon their pet white deer, They feed their pheasants, pigeons and tame swan.

Their flowers they plant or tend, their vines they rear.

They plan what on the morrow they will do, And what next week, next month, perchance next vear;

For every moment there is something new; And nought find they that's ill in anything; But joys are joined to joys like gold beads on a string.

So full her heart of love's beatitude Thus to her groom did she confession make; (For in her nature nought was of the prude,) And joy it was of her great joy to speak: "To know that your dear self was by my side, That I was yours, and you were wholly mine, And that together evermore we'd bide,

You like a tree, I like a clinging vine,— Forevermore beyond the reach of chance: This was a bliss, indeed, beyond all utterance.

"But when you'd softly press my happy hand,
And gently kiss my cheek without a word,
Then did my spirit dwell in rapture's land,
As full of joy as that bright cherub bird
When its sweet strains of praise the air of Heaven
stirred.

"And when your arms around my form you wove, Looked down with loving smile, so tender sweet, Into my eyes, and said 'My darling love,' Or other words with fondest thoughts replete,—Then such a luscious ecstasy was mine,—So ravishing and free from all alloy,—I felt a bliss that surely was divine, So that my spirit had no wish for other joy."

When came their dreams, that Angel's song they heard,

Pouring her heart in happy gratitude, That, after love's pure bliss so long deferred, It now had come, with all else that was good; And Many and his Pearl forever one. Soft and entrancing was her every tone,—

As musical as Eden's nightingale, Perched in the moonlight, on the tree of life, Singing unto the stars a lover's tale, To cheer the musing heart of his dear nesting wife.

CANTO 4

A ROYAL RECEPTION

At Court it was a day of splendid state. For all the lords and ladies of the land The King and Queen held a reception grand: Hither they came in equipages great, Attended oft by showy retinues, To do obeisance to their Majesties; Themselves arrayed in robes of richest hues, And in their texture fine as talent could devise.

There all that fairest was to human ken: With brilliant lights the palace was ablaze; The kingdom's pride all open to the gaze, Its loveliest ladies and its manliest men. And all that could the mind or senses daze, From servant boys to royal counsellors, From little girls to ladies grand with trains. Flowers and foliage filled the corridors. While throbbed the perfumed air, with music's sweetest strains.

Loomed noble Strombold, Count of Fedmer Fief. Conspicuous in this grand and brilliant throng; Except the king, of all he seemed the chief,— So great his height, so huge and straight his frame,

Grizzled his hair and beard, and flowing long, Hero renowned, and now all fresh his fame Along the Baltic's shores, and through the north,—

Wearing his sword and decorations all,
Revered and loved for his brave deeds, and
worth,—

The grandest man that night, in that resplendent hall.

Legion the brave and Margie his fair bride, Beaming with bliss walked by great Strombold's side,

Legion to all did his great sire recall,
He and fair Margie, of that glorious train,
Were by the young the most admired of all:
(For love's romance doth youthful hearts enchain:)

Legion gazetted Knight of Shonbirg Hall, And Margaret the fair, Countess of Redenfayn.

With gracious courtesy the King and Queen Received them all, and wished them joy and health, With life most long, and ever all serene,— And of earth's pleasures great an endless wealth; To come again, and oft, each one they bade.

The Queen so mild took Margie by the hand,

Declared her mother's face and form she had,

But brow she thought more like her father's broad and bland.

Her beauty praised, also her broidery.

"Legion," she said, "most lovely is your bride,
And happy may you both forever be.

Nevermore parted from each other's side,
And live forever free from more mischance."

Then, ecstasy, in letters large and bright,
On Margie's fair and blushing countenance,
Her autograph all plain, and beautiful did write.

Now three loud blasts a trumpeter did blow,
(That all the guests attention might bestow,)
And proclamation made of knighthood's law,
Commanding all good knights full near to draw.
The King his sword unsheathed, a royal blade;
On one knee Legion bent, his head bowed low:
(So all have done who have true knighthood won.)
Pale Margie turned, her smiles away did fade,
Within her cautious heart, not sure what might be done.

The King with sternness raised his glittering blade,

As though to strike a deadly blow,—but down On Legion's back gently the sword he laid:

(Whom a king's blade doth touch doth win renown.)

"Arise, Sir Knight!" the King with smiles exclaimed.

Then blowed the trumpet, and the bands all played;

While all that royal throng with rapture flamed, And far and wide resounded the applause. Sir Legion proudly rose: a Knight he was. On him were girt bright spurs and shining sword, Which in the Crusade he so bravely wore, Presented by the mighty Emperor His knightly deeds and valor to record: And so, at last fulfilled, the dream his youth adored.

All ever and anon throughout the night,
The King's jester to all gave great delight,—
To young and old, the foolish and the wise.
His bells and lute in every place he played,
And many truths he told, clad in disuise.
"Our King," said he, "e'en like a god appears:
Out of a pearl he has a countess made,
Fair as the blessed saint, whose holy name she bears.

"With his good sword a legion does he smite, And lo, arises in its place a Knight! Yet leaves the Legion greater than before. Most marvelous of all: by words alone A Count he doth unto full life restore, (Whom for long years black death was said to own,)

Returns his fame, his spear and shield and sword, And gives to Fedmer Fief, again its rightful lord."

CANTO 5

THE BAN OF BALDURBANE REMOVED

Then rose a woman old, with locks of gray,
Her garb and features strange, and cried amain,
"The spell from Shonbirg Hall is done away
Cast by that mother's curse at Baldurbane.
A Legion's heart, pierced by a shaft of pearl,
Turns to the paths of peace from paths of war,—
That shaft the conquering love of this fair girl,
Varangian Margaret, child of the Counsellor.
Dead is the raven king, dead all those sworn
Vengeance most dire to wreak on those to Legion
born."

"Ha, ha!" the jester cried; "'tis all so plain; For Margaret in French a pearl doth mean; And Margaret's love-shaft hath pierced the heart Of Legion, who from paths of war doth part; And heeds her voice when gentle peace doth call: So gone's the curse that shadowed Shonbirg Hall! All evil charms the charm of love outcharms, And from a Legion's path casts out all harms."

Again the company did loud applaud, And in the plaudits joined the music loud; Never before, perhaps, was there a happier crowd.

Whence came this hag, and whither went, none knew;

Unseen she came, unseen she sunk from view,
As though enveloped by a viewless pall.
She had been, was, and was not, that was all
Any could say, when questioned as to her.
Strangely she came, strangely did disappear:
While through the air, just then, came crow of
chanticleer.

The jester now most loudly clapped his hands,
And sharply cried, like one who gives commands:
"Hear me, while of Count Strombold I do tell,
Once more the lord of all the Fedmer lands,
Who doth to-day all living men excel.
His wisdom great as Solomon possessed,
Or mighty Odin carried in his breast;
That strength was his which Sampson strong displayed,

When he a thousand slew with bone for blade;
Not e'en did Mars take more delight in war,
And when in battle terrible as Thor;
The dauntless courage his that Baldur had
When all the gods at him their missiles hurled,
Or that stern valor which the Spartan clad
Who, with three hundred men, fought all the
Persian world.

"Devoted to his King's and country's cause As any Pope of Rome unto the Cross; And sooner yield his freedom or his life Than suffer harm to country, friend, or wife. Borne down by slander once, now conqueror, And by the King more loved than e'er before. Now, by command of both their Majesties, Proclaim I here, with mighty emphasis, Strombold, the great and peerless paragon, Of all that's true and good, bright honor's champion!"

A bugler then three blasts did loudly blow, With music gay the hall did overflow, Most warmly did the company applaud, And Strombold loomed to all, e'en like a demi-god!

By what at Court she saw and heard and felt, Charmed Margie was to ecstasy supreme: So unlike aught while on the isle she dwelt, Yet so like what as little girl she'd seen, Whether this was of that merely a dream, Or this but what of that, her memory did glean.

When asked what ladies pleased her best at Court, Except the Queen none could she specify,-So fascinated was she by the port And gracious manner of her Majesty. When asked what noble men seemed most to loom, None but the King, the Count, and her dear groom,

Could she describe: all others were as nought. "Except the jester!" said she with a laugh. "What memories sweet unto my mind he brought! Which, as from goblet bright, I did all happy quaff."

CANTO 6

COUNT STROMBOLD CONTENTED

What Legion did so well at Shonbirg Hall
Strombold was quick to do at Fedmer Fief;
And happy was each thane, and serf and thrall,
To see in power again their honored chief.
That mighty steed he strode at Wodenow
Alive and hearty in its stall was found;
And when its master's face and form it saw,
With neighs of love it made the air resound,
While eyes and mane, and tail its joy did show.
There, too, still lived his favorite Danish hourd,
Half-blind from age; but when his voice it heard,
Quick as a thought its feeble limbs it stirred;
And leaping up, as though in youthful chase,
Fawned on its master's breast, barked low, and
licked his face.

Girt to his belt again his runic sword, His honors and estates in full restored, Happy, indeed, was Count Strombold, the brave, Thus vindicated, and his foes subdued. All gifts of fortune fit for man so grave Upon him lavished in their plenitude. And, as one morning in the Shonbirg lanes Alone he strolled, charmed with the air and sky, And scenery, all free from woes and pains, Thus to life's benefits, glad did he testify:

"Well, after all I am not loser much!

My evil fate, at last, lets go its clutch.

True, I was badly treated years ago,

And forced an exile vile to Redenfayn;

But there my time so happily did flow

That not a cloud it left, nor scar, nor pain.

With human history I got in touch,

And what there was in alchemy—not much;

With my dear child all sorrow to rebuff,

And be my student too, when old enough;

She angel-like, with love's all artless art,

Keeping love's flame alive, deep down within my heart.

"It will be found, when all is manifest,
And viewed aright, and tried by truest test,
Whatever happens happens for the best;
And from all bonds of wrong we'll be released:
Else all in vain were God, and church, and priest.
Had I not gone condemned to Redenfayn,
Where, what, and whither would I be right now?
My bones, perhaps, beneath some battle plain;
My child, if living, where and what and how?

And now, see where and what I am,—and she,
(Seldom before blessed by time's benefits,)
Alive and honored to a high degree;
We both as happy as this life permits:
I, Count and Counsellor, my wrongs undone,
She, wife of Legion to whom much we owe;
And life to her bright as May's rising sun,
While cloudless is my sun, and yet all far from
low.

"The curtain, dropped upon my early stage,
I'll let stay down;—my heart's still strong and
brave.

And though I'm entering on life's elder age,
A new and brighter world I now do have.
All far removed from scenes of hate and strife,
And free from every grief and every care,
New joys I feel budding on my old life
That flowers no doubt will bring, and blessed
fruits will bear.

"And thus my service to great Legion done, Like fabled bread upon the waters cast, Repaid in honor by his noble son, Of all my days makes happiest the last. For me henceforth a new life and new earth, And for that new career have I new birth; First was I born of human flesh and sin, Now, of the spirit that's to God akin. From first to last nought have I to regret,

My new sun rising ere the old is set. Peace like a crown from Heaven rests on my head, A joy pure as a saint's dwells in my soul, Hate and ambition both forever dead, And not a cloud of care across my sky doth roll."

CANTO 7

SHONBIRG HALL THE HOME OF HAPPY LUCK

Than Shonbirg Hall there was in all the world No happier place, no fairer shrine of love. All evil things had far away been hurled, And brightest shone the blessed skies above. All this was surely caused, the gossips say, Because on saintly Margie's wedding day, The village cocks for joy did loudly crow, A white sea dove on Shonbirg Hall did coo, A raven from the belfry frightened flew, (Which a bright eagle caught, and fiercely slew;)

And hag had said that ban of Baldurbane Would on the Legions nevermore remain. The clock of fate a brighter noon had struck, And made of Shonbirg Hall, the home of happy luck.

In all the earth never a happier pair Than Legion brave and good, and Margie fair. Some new joy 'round their hearts each hour twined

Some new cord each day wove their souls to bind. Their crown of bliss to make all brighter still, Their cup of happiness all full to fill, Strombold the Count, the priest good Father John.

And Jux the true, now free, in Shonbirg Hall
Did make their home, a happy garrison;
Where all did work for each, and each for all;
Where each apart was free, but all to each a thrall.

The happiness that's centered all in self
The worm doth feel when mud doth fill its maw,
The miser feels when gloating o'er his pelf,
The buzzard feels when carrion fills his craw.
True happiness is that celestial zest
That thrills his heart who helps a fellow man.
He who helps others most himself helps best,
And happiest is he, who does what good he can.

True fame did Legion find in doing good,
True glory, working in the paths of peace,
True wealth, in giving cause for gratitude,
In making love to grow and hate to cease;
True work, in healing hearts not making woes,
In helping needy friends, and not in slaying foes.

Thanking the eagle for good service done, As it flew upward high unto the sun, Legion, his change of heart to show, and prove, His symbol changed from eagle to the dove. His sires were Legion called because a host Each was within himself, on fields of blood; But he was Legion called because the most He did of all in works of brotherhood. In helping all, the freeman and the thrall, In bringing pleasure and relieving pain, No two more honored in the King's domain, Than Legion, loving Knight of Shonbirg Hall, And Margie, Countess fair, of rock-bound Redenfayn.

The locket that his saintly mother willed He still did wear, fair Margie's hair within; Her jeweled locket, given by the Queen, With Legion's portrait and her own now filled; And that dear dove-brought heart, so close akin, Within her bosom day and night she wore: Somehow with luck these lockets seemed inwove, Nor e'er laid off they were, -not for an hour: So weird and sacred are, the mysteries of love.

Sometimes her thoughts to Many would return, And there awhile would lovingly so journ; But less and less her heart to him did stray, For Legion grew, while Many shrunk away: Too near and often were fond Legion's lips, And so Many, at last, went into sweet eclipse.

But Legion ever in his heart did hold
The face of that fair daughter of the Dane,
Despite the pleasures new and manifold,
And all the charms that did his soul enchain.
Ever in Margie saw he that sweet girl,
Enlarged, perfected and all glorified;
Oft in his tenderest moods he called her "Pearl"
And oft he'd fondly say, that she was "Many's"
bride.

CANTO 8

IN PARADISE

Fair Shonbirg Hall, a shrine of beauty now,
Was their abode of bliss. By artist's hands
Its walls and halls made bright as Baldur's brow,
With brilliant tints and beautiful designs;
Its gardens, walks and groves,—and all its lands,
Made picturesque with arbors, flowers and vines;
And all that wealth could do, or skill devise,
Fair Shonbirg Hall and grounds, to make a Paradise.

Who saw her form, e'er stopped thereon to gaze, Who saw her face, an impulse felt to praise, On whom she looked, with raptures sweet she filled, On whom she smiled, with ecstasies she thrilled. Such ever Margie's supreme graciousness, So exquisite her beauty and her smile,

So ready (where no wrong), to acquiesce, So anxious all in love to reconcile, So ever soft and cheery her sweet voice, So prodigal of kindly courtesy, None could but in their very souls rejoice, Where she around exhaled felicity, And made e'en jarring hearts in perfect love agree.

Ever good Legion and fair Margie seemed Within the Vale of Joy to have their home, Possessing all of bliss they'd ever dreamed;-Not far above seemed heaven's pearly dome, Near Eden's gate, reached by its shine and songs; Enraptured ever by love's ecstasies, And all that unto perfect joy belongs, With all its accents strong, and fullest emphasis.

Joy, like a tree of life, bears flowers and fruits Ambrosial every day: its fruit the food, Which satisfies desire but never gluts, And always is most fair, sweet, pure and good. As in a happy mother's loving arms, Unconscious of life's ills and death's alarms, A sleeping babe, rocked by her bosom's swell, Doth rest secure, as in love's citadel, So Margie did in Legion's heart abide, So rested Legion in fair Margie's love, Their hearts and minds and souls all satisfied,-No thought of change, no wish for aught above.

Joy's furthest Thule did their spirits reach, Contented there to bide always was each; Bliss by their side with wings all folded stood, No other where to fly: there was Beatitude.

God hath true love with raptures all imbued.
An ocean of delight within each soul
Spread far, and wide, and deep, its crystal flood,
E'er at full tide, with waves that gently roll.
No storms upon this ocean ever blow,
No gloomy cloud its beauty ever dims,
No birds of prey on it their shadows throw,
No beast, nor evil fish, within it swims;
But in its depths are all felicities.
There are the balms that bless the blithesome
breeze,

There are the islands of Beatitude,
And there the gardens of Hesperides;
Above it smiles a sky that's full of good,
Within it evil feet ne'er dare intrude;
For there, in truth, is rapture's holy ground;
And there all beauty and all bliss are found,
While Love's almighty arms do safely hedge it
round.

A Myrtle Leaf here brilliantly displayed Famed Shonbirg Hall, in beauty glorified;—A home 'twould seem for Paradise just made,

Where love and beauty could forever bide, And angels might with it their time in Heaven divide.

On earth her loving mission closed in bliss,
To Heaven that Guardian Angel turned her face,
Leaving on Legion's soul her farewell kiss,
On Margie's heart her blessing and her grace.
And this the farewell song she softly sung,
As o'er them both, in love, awhile she fondly hung:

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL'S FAREWELL

"Could angels love as women love,

Could my heart burn with passion's flame,

Then would I quit the realms above

On Legion's soul to write my name.

"But though so sweet and pure and fond All gladly I his love resign To one, all other ones beyond, Whose love for him is love divine.

"Gone is that ban of Baldurbane,
And in its place the luck of love;
That raven by the eagle slain,
And all supreme my white sea dove.

"But while to Heaven I wing my way,
On you, loved ones, my thoughts I'll keep;
For your welfare I'll ever pray,
And sweet dreams send to bless your sleep.

"Farewell, farewell, sweethearts of mine,
Now wrapped up in each other's love.

If e'er in grief your souls repine
O'er head will coo my white sea dove."

Then heavenward her shining wings she spread: Such was that Angel's love: the Myrtle Leaves so read.

Who more of Legion and his bride would know
To Shonbirg Hall and Redenfayn should go;
Where welcome and good fellowship they'll find,
With all that cheers the heart, or charms the
mind.

There too they'll find great Strombold, hale and strong,

Good Jux, once serf now free, and Father John; Whose happy days their lives and health prolong; While he who bore that missive, days agone, Is often there to join in merry song; And sitting in her cote, not far above, With eyes half closed in bliss, low cooes that white sea dove.

So did the Scribe the lettered *Leaves* translate; So did to him the mystic pictures mean;

And such their conjury upon his fate,
One happy day, the fairest e'er he'd seen,
He at love's altar wed with Yndafrene;
And when, into each other's eyes they gazed,
Thoughts of the lettered Leaves their spirits
dazed,

And somehow she to him seemed Margaret, While he somehow, to her, seemed Legion's duplicate.

EPILOGUE

Ι

The chasms all forever passed,
Upon the Eden shores of bliss
Now rest fair Margie's feet at last
All safe from misery's abyss;
And every rapture known to love
Doth thrill her heart with ecstasy,
While joys like those of saints above
Her life fill with felicity.

\mathbf{II}

No thorns upon her pathway grow,

No clouds obscure her happy sky,
All flowers of gladness 'round her glow,

And nought of sorrow cometh nigh.

The Vale of Joy her spirit treads,

And feasts upon its many sweets;

Kind fortune 'round her pleasures spreads,

And every mishap quick defeats.

III

Brave Legion in her arms she folds,
His soul to hers forever wed,
And nought else that the great world holds
Doth Margie languish for, or need.

Compared with him all other golds
Are dregs of dirt or dross of lead;
And out of him her fancy molds
All that delights her heart or head.

So said the Myrtle Leaves, and said no more; And at their end, that Wreath a fragrant blossom bore.









